

THE TIMES



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The best news and analysis from the front OPERATION DESERT FOX

Michael Evans, award-winning defence editor, on the bombing page 3

Damian Whitworth and Giles Whittell on the turmoil facing Clinton page 18

Michael Rose on the only way to oust Saddam page 2



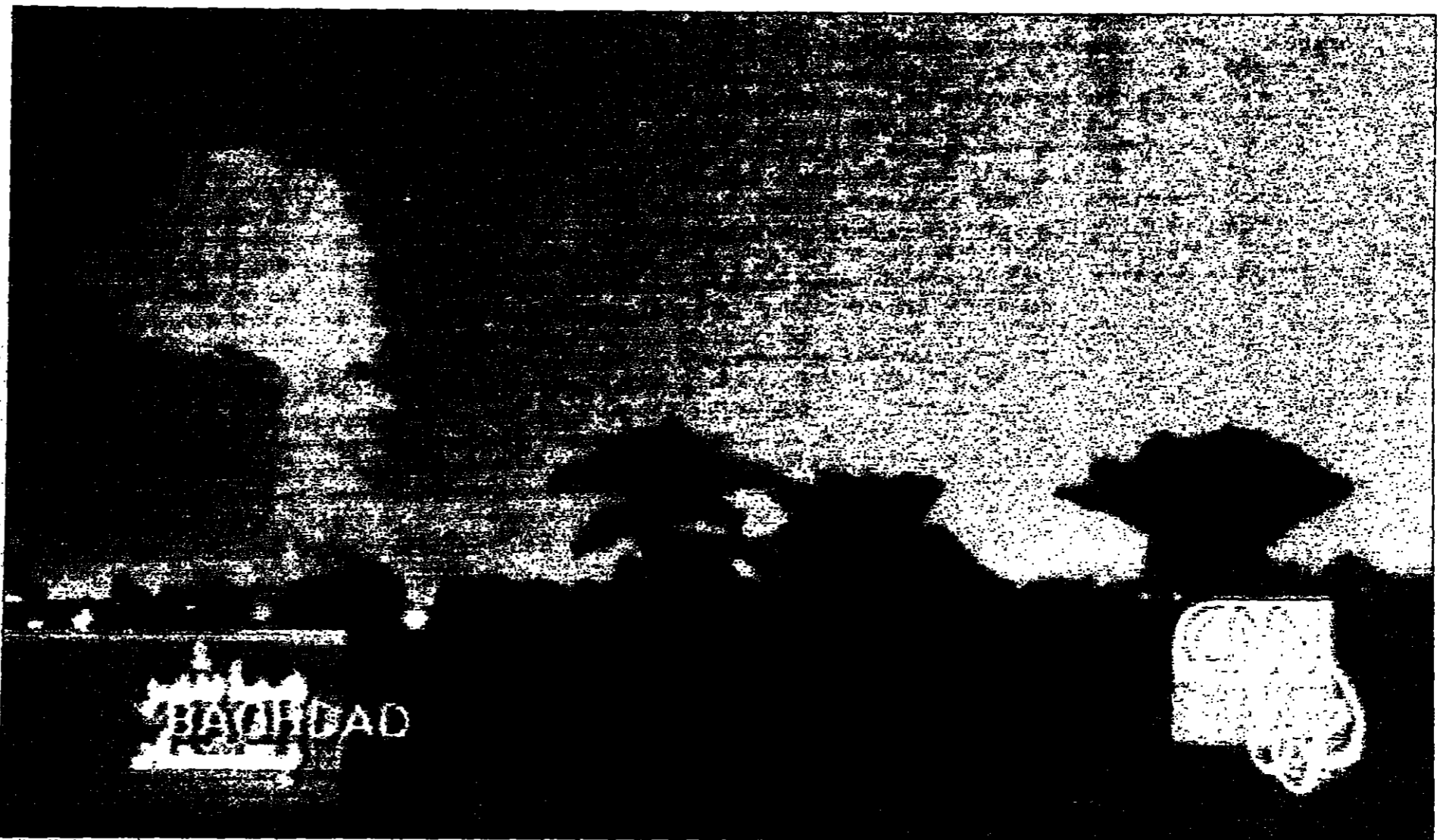
RAF Tornados join Iraq attack

US reveals 'drastic rise in raids'

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR, AND IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

BRITISH Tornados joined the bombing raids on Iraq last night in a second day of attacks, causing devastating damage to President Saddam Hussein's most important military facilities.

Details of other damage were not released, either because they were not available or because they would reveal too much about the continuing operation. Officials would say only that some of the other raids had been even more successful than those on the intelligence and Republican Guards barracks reduced to rubble.



Television pictures show buildings in Baghdad ablaze as US bombs hit their targets in the first wave of airstrikes on Iraq in the early hours of yesterday

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guided bombs, returned safely to their base at Ali al-Salem in Kuwait. They also targeted command bunkers, air defence sites and other military installations. American B52 bombers from Diego Garcia were also used for the first time yesterday.

Foreign television crews in Baghdad were taken to what the Iraqis claimed was a bombed-out rice warehouse. Mehdi Saleh, Iraqi trade minister, said the building had held 2,600 tons of rice imported under an oil-for-food programme negotiated with the UN as a humanitarian waiver from economic sanctions.



MPS on all sides back bombings

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

MPs from all parties last night strongly backed Britain's involvement in the bombing raids on Iraq after Tony Blair told the Commons that it was the only responsible option.

the Prime Minister, who spoke as British Tornado aircraft were returning from their first strike on Iraqi targets, was savagely criticised by a minority of Labour leftwingers, but received support from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties and most Labour MPs.

and that the threat he poses is fully contained...if necessary, and if we have serious evidence from our intensive surveillance or from intelligence that his capability is being rebuilt, we will be ready to take further military action.

lies offering full support. "Others who have felt unable to do so have shown their understanding," he claimed. Ministers suggested that the international reaction was better than expected, with little condemnation from the Arab world.

Clinton had no alternative but to order a military response to the continuous deceit of Saddam. But the Labour MP George Galloway suggested that Britain had been degraded and diminished by the attacks which were being led not by "Richard the Lionheart, but Clinton the Liar".

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Law lords overturn decision and allow Pinochet hearing

By JOANNA BAILE

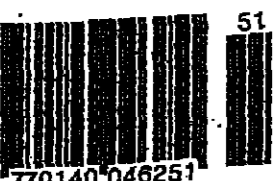
GENERAL Augusto Pinochet was given a fresh opportunity to win his freedom yesterday after an historic decision by five law lords to throw out their colleagues' ruling which had denied him sovereign immunity from prosecution.

mann should not have sat on the law lords appeal panel which overturned a High Court decision that the General had sovereign immunity. He said: "I should have stated, in the special circumstances of this case, including the fact that Amnesty International was joined as intervener and appeared by counsel before the appellate committee, Lord Hoffmann, who did not disclose his links with Amnesty International, was disqualified from sitting."

make Lord Hoffmann question his position as a law lord. At the Pinochet Foundation, a private group of loyalists in Santiago, the decision triggered "a wave of optimism and renewed faith," according to its director, Luyis Cortes, a retired general. In a telephone call to the General Pinochet's Surrey house, Mr Cortes was told that the General "was extremely happy, sharing the moment with his wife and a number of visitors."

IRA conviction is quashed Danny McNamee, who was jailed for 25 years for making IRA bombs, was freed when the Court of Appeal declared his conviction unsafe, but the judges said that did not mean he was innocent.

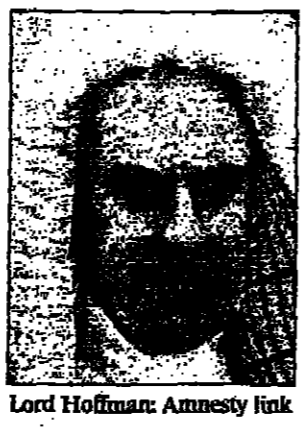
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Lord Hoffmann: Amnesty link

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Cheers accompany Gucci-shoed light brigade in full charge

If you seek an argument against that most fashionable of political virtues, consensus, you would have found it yesterday at the Commons as the Prime Minister enquired the whole House's support for the Government's policy of bombing Iraq.

There being no anti-war party, the dominant view and ruling passions within each party were deferred to. MPs on both sides vied only to find more felicitous ways of expressing the accepted wisdom. Scarcely another opinion was heard. Few unkind questions were asked. Half an hour's exchanges could have been summarised thus: Prime Minister: "Let's bomb Baghdad, boys!" MPs: "Hooray!"



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

PM: "Not that we do this lightly, but with heavy hearts."
MPs: "Hear, hear!"
Solitary Leftie: "This is a blunder."
MPs: "Shame! Resign! Saddam's lackey! Speak for England..." etc.

Regardless what view one takes of the wisdom of the bombing, it was dismaying to see so momentous a decision endorsed so lightly by MPs, or with so little reflection of the range of opinions which exists privately among them. George Galloway (Lab.

Glasgow Kelvin), a convinced opponent of Operation Desert Fox, was almost lynched when he spoke. There were cries of "disgraceful!" from his own side. Much was said by people in Gucci shoes about courage in battle, but it did not take guts to cheer for the war party at Westminster yesterday: it took guts to do anything else. In a Parliament of 659 free spirits, two were rash enough to dissent after Tony

Blair had spoken. The exchanges which followed were almost pointless, and the Statement itself was redundant as it repeated what the Prime Minister had said and anticipated what the Foreign Secretary was about to say. But it gave Mr Blair a platform. The Prime Minister, who looked tired but sounded forceful, was passionate yet curiously defensive. Rather than a statesman setting out what had to be done, Mr

Blair sounded like an advocate, fiercely — emotionally — rebutting the case put by counsel for the other side. Except the Commons had failed to provide such counsel. It was almost as though Mr Blair was arguing with himself. Perhaps he was. In the following debate, a small band of rebels on the Labour side raised their heads. Dennis Canavan (Lab, Falkirk W) attacked his side virulently. Tony Benn (Lab,

Chesterfield) reminded hearers of his oratorical power. In a brave, interesting speech, Tam Dalyell (Lab, Linlithgow) defied the government line from a position more scientific than ideological. Missing was the kind of Tory sceptical of war, not of liberal sympathy for its victims, but because of the waste of blood and treasure for little practical gain. Powell, Ridley, Budge, Biffen... how I miss those voices!

Britons urged to leave region

By ROSS DUNN AND JAMES BONE

BRITISH tour operators began flying home hundreds of holidaymakers from the Israeli Red Sea resort town of Eilat and cancelled scheduled trips because of the show-down. The companies were acting on advice from the Foreign Office, which said Britons should not visit Israel, Kuwait or Palestinian-controlled territory. Britain's biggest tour operator, Thomson, sent two jets to Eilat to evacuate 600 British holidaymakers. Air 2000 and Britannia sent shuttle buses to Eilat hotels to collect the passengers to be flown back on the hastily arranged flights. Airline companies told their clients that if they did not leave by yesterday, they would forfeit their seats on flights. However, not all Britons took up the offer. Michelle Peters of London said she planned to stay in Eilat with her husband and new baby. "We're close to Jordan and Egypt," she said. "Eilat is the safest place in the area."

War planners must keep end in sight

THE lights on the Downing Street Christmas tree that symbolise our hopes for peace and goodwill, and which twinkled so prettily behind the Prime Minister as he announced the launching of airstrikes against Iraq, served as a reminder of the considerable degree of confusion in our thinking about how best to deal with President Saddam Hussein. Against a mounting background of argument concerning the moral and legal justification for waging war against Iraq, the political consequences of such action, and the likely military effectiveness of airstrikes, it is useful to return to basic principles. In my opinion there is no one better placed to comment on the current situation than Clausewitz — the great 19th-century theorist who regarded war simply as "an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will". He recognised, however, that waging war was not an isolated act but was "a political instrument", and that it would often be limited in scope. He also firmly believed that the first step in war should not be taken "without thinking about the last". On December 16, 1998, the US and UK struck violently at Iraq, with the declared intention of "degrading and diminishing" Iraq's capability to wage war with weapons of mass destruction. It is hoped that by such action Saddam might be compelled to abandon



General Sir Michael Rose argues that the military option will not work and maps out a peace strategy

his policy of developing weapons of mass destruction. This limited aim has, of course, been pursued by the West since the end of the Cold War — but without successful conclusion. The reason for this failure is clear. Military capability consists not only of technical means but includes intention — i.e. both the physical and the moral components of fighting power. Thus, while the technical means of developing weapons

in an act of war have thought much about the last step that may be required. The target presented by Saddam is formidable. Iraq is a large country with many of its facilities, including command and control systems, buried deep underground. Its technical expertise is high. Chemical and biological weapon systems are relatively easy to produce, nor do they need great energy sources or bulky equipment in their manufacturing process. It has also been relatively easy for Iraq to acquire nuclear technology and fissile material, mainly as a result of the demise of the Soviet Union. The means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction possessed by Saddam are infinitely variable, ranging from intercontinental missiles to suitcase-delivered bombs or aerosols being sprayed either from the air or the ground.

There is also considerable asymmetry between the two opponents with the West dependent on sophisticated hardware and software for its intelligence-gathering and strike systems, while Iraq merely needs dedicated collaborators and suicide bombers to respond. Even if Western intelli-

gence about the present whereabouts of Iraqi weapon systems is accurate and the attrition rate of the current airstrikes is high (although in my experience this rarely proves to be the case), it is obvious that the destruction of today's facilities will not bring about the permanent end of the threat posed by Iraq. Manufacturing facilities will rapidly be re-created and the threat repeated. Airstrikes by themselves, as has been so often proved in the past decade, cannot eliminate or diminish in the long term such a complex threat as that posed by the regime in Iraq. Thus it is clear that as long as Saddam and his regime remain in power, an intention to possess these weapon systems, and therefore some level of threat, will continue to exist. Current Western policy is thus doomed to failure in the long term, with each round of military activity producing progressively more politically negative consequences in the surrounding region than the previous one. If the West is genuinely serious about imposing peace and stability in the region by force of arms, its politicians and military strategists will have to accept, like Clausewitz, that only through waging absolute war, i.e. one resulting in the "overthrow of the enemy", will their ultimate purpose be achieved. The elimination of the threat is logically dependent on the elimination of Saddam and his regime. Limited war cannot deliver such a decisive result. Bombing Iraqi installations and vaguely hoping that there will be an uprising of the Iraqi people against their tyrannical ruler certainly would not represent a valid strategy to Clausewitz. Unless a more comprehensive policy aimed at ridding Iraq of Saddam and his regime is developed, then the West would do better to abandon its strategy of confrontation, and attempt a policy of constructive engagement. In this case, the twinkling lights on the Downing Street Christmas tree might offer a better prospect for the future than those lights caused by exploding bombs.

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of mass destruction in Iraq may have degraded from time to time in the years that have elapsed since the end of the Gulf War by the action of the UN and the West, Iraq's intent to gain possession of these weapons systems remains undiminished. It is doubtful if those in the West who have been responsible for taking these first steps



Police keep a vigil in Whitehall yesterday after anti-war protesters daubed government buildings with slogans dripping with fake blood.

Whitehall daubed

Several protesters were arrested when two buckets of red paint were thrown at the Foreign Office building (Sue Lappeman writes). A church minister's wife was charged with spray painting war protest slogans on the Cenotaph and a Ministry of Defence building, Sylvia Boyes, 55, appeared at Bow Street Magistrates Court, London, on two counts of criminal damage. Wearing a grey T-shirt with the slogan "Stop sanctions. We are killing the children of Iraq", Mrs Boyes represented herself at the hearing which was adjourned at one stage so she could telephone her husband.

Nicholas Evans, the stipendiary magistrate, granted her bail. She is due to appear before him again on January 22. Outside court, the slightly built mother of four gave her occupation as a peace campaigner. Anti-sanctions campaign group Voices in the Wilder-

ness said two members of their organisation were arrested by police and accused of criminal damage after slogans "Stop the killing" and "Lift the Sanctions" were daubed on a building in Whitehall. Elsewhere, five peace campaigners — who live at a peace camp near Scotland's Faslane nuclear submarine base in Argyll — were stopped at Sam by Ministry of Defence police officers as they attempted to enter the base. An MoD spokeswoman confirmed that they had been arrested but declined to say what charges would be brought against them.

Life goes on as normal for RAF families left behind

IT SHOULD have been a time for festive celebrations, but it was difficult to dispel the gloom descending over Lossiemouth on Wednesday night. Every radio bulletin, every television newsflash brought with it fear of the worst for wives and girlfriends at the Scottish base of all of the Tornados pilots in the Gulf.

Playgroup leaders and RAF personnel alike tried to get on with life as normally as they could, fuelling a strange mixture of the mundane and the unknown. While the station's No. 12 Squadron was preparing for battle, the units that remained in Scotland continued their training flights as normal in pouring rain. Then came the news just before bedtime which the 2,500 Lossiemouth personnel and their families had been praying for. The Tornados, as familiar a sound in the town as the gulls and howling wind, were safe at the Kuwait base. The town of Lossiemouth, built on a hilltop 2,900 miles from Baghdad, is not pretty. Its sturdy grey stone houses were built not to win admiration, but to withstand the elements. The town of 7,500 souls, whose patron saint St Geraldine promised to look after men of the sea, is accustomed to the anxieties of war.

Fear of unknown dampens festive cheer in community well versed in battle, writes Jason Allardyce

Its crews formed part of the airborne armada which flew sorties in Operation Desert Storm in 1991. That was of limited comfort to the families left behind once more as husbands and boyfriends launched renewed attacks in the heart of President Saddam Hussein's regime. Zoe Barnes, 28, wife of Wing Commander Steve Barnes, leading yesterday's No. 12 Squadron sortie, did her best to drum up morale. The mother of three boys, aged six, four and 18 months

Golden rule for survival

— which she joked was enough to form her own "bombing squadron" — said the mood of the families was very positive. It was the last Gulf War which brought her and her husband together: she was an air stewardess in Bahrain while he was there. Mrs Barnes, who only learned of the latest air raids against Iraq when she tuned into News at Ten on Wednesday evening, admitted the separation was taking its toll on mothers, fathers and children. Asked about her sons, she

said: "Each parent deals with their children the way they want to. My children know that their daddy is in Kuwait and they know that is the job he does... We understand and support each other." She said that the wives worried at times like this. "When we talk to our husbands on the phone, which can be very sporadic because of their operational duties, we do our best not to cry because we know it will upset them and take their minds off the important job they are there to do." Some of them could not help themselves and broke down, however, when they watched a nativity play put on by their children a few days ago in the town hall, where prayers were said for husbands and fathers. Sheila Hayward, who leads Torrington Nursery in the town where half the 45 children attending have fathers serving at the base, said that children had sent video copies of the play out to Kuwait. "One little boy actually saw his dad on the TV news being interviewed the other day, and he was very proud of him," she said. Other wives were asked by the RAF not to speak to the media on the basis that personal family details could be used against any British pilots captured by Iraqis.

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Fateful Anglo-US summit in the skies

MOMENTS before he boarded Air Force One to leave Israel, President Clinton took Benjamin Netanyahu aside and confided to him that preparations were under way for a renewed attack on Iraq.

The US President and the Israeli Prime Minister talked earnestly and quietly for a few minutes, out of earshot, Hillary Clinton hovering in the background, until Mr Clinton turned to climb the steps of his aircraft and wave goodbye.

At the time, the exchange was thought to concern the foundering Middle East peace process or perhaps the impending impeachment vote against the President in Con-

Ian Brodie describes the Air Force One phone call to Tony Blair that led to raids

gress. In fact, it was the prelude to 24 crowded hours in which the impeachment crisis would take a back seat to the Iraq confrontation.

During Tuesday evening's flight to Washington, Mr Clinton held a conference with his senior national security team. Two of them were with him on the 747, Samuel Berger, the National Security Adviser, and Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State. The others, including Vice-President Al Gore, and Wil-

liam Cohen, the Defence Secretary, were among those linked by radio from the ground.

Mr Clinton and his team had known since last Sunday that Richard Butler, chairman of the UN weapons inspectors, was preparing a report for the Security Council that would accuse President Saddam Hussein of breaking his word to co-operate with efforts to unearth his weapons of mass destruction.

As his plane flew over Europe,

Mr Clinton's advisers told him they were unanimous in their belief that the US and Britain must honour their pledge to strike without warning if Saddam broke his promises.

A call was placed to Tony Blair to find out if he agreed. He did.

After Mr Clinton landed, he was immediately on the phone. He called Richard Gephardt and Tom Daschle, Democratic leaders in the House and Senate, to tell them of the airstrikes and to take the temperature on his prospects for impeachment. It was 1.30am before he got to bed.

Not normally a morning person, Mr Clinton was nonetheless suited

up, his cufflinks gleaming, for a 7.30am meeting with the same team of advisers. Again they were unanimous. The attack was on. Mr Blair was called again.

On his way back to the White House private quarters, Mr Clinton dropped in on the daily staff meeting of about two dozen aides in the corner office of his chief of staff, John Podesta. The main topic was their anti-impeachment strategy.

Mr Clinton, standing, his arms folded, told them pensively: "It's important for all of us to keep on doing the jobs we were sent here to do. As we go through this, you should remember that, ultimately, the

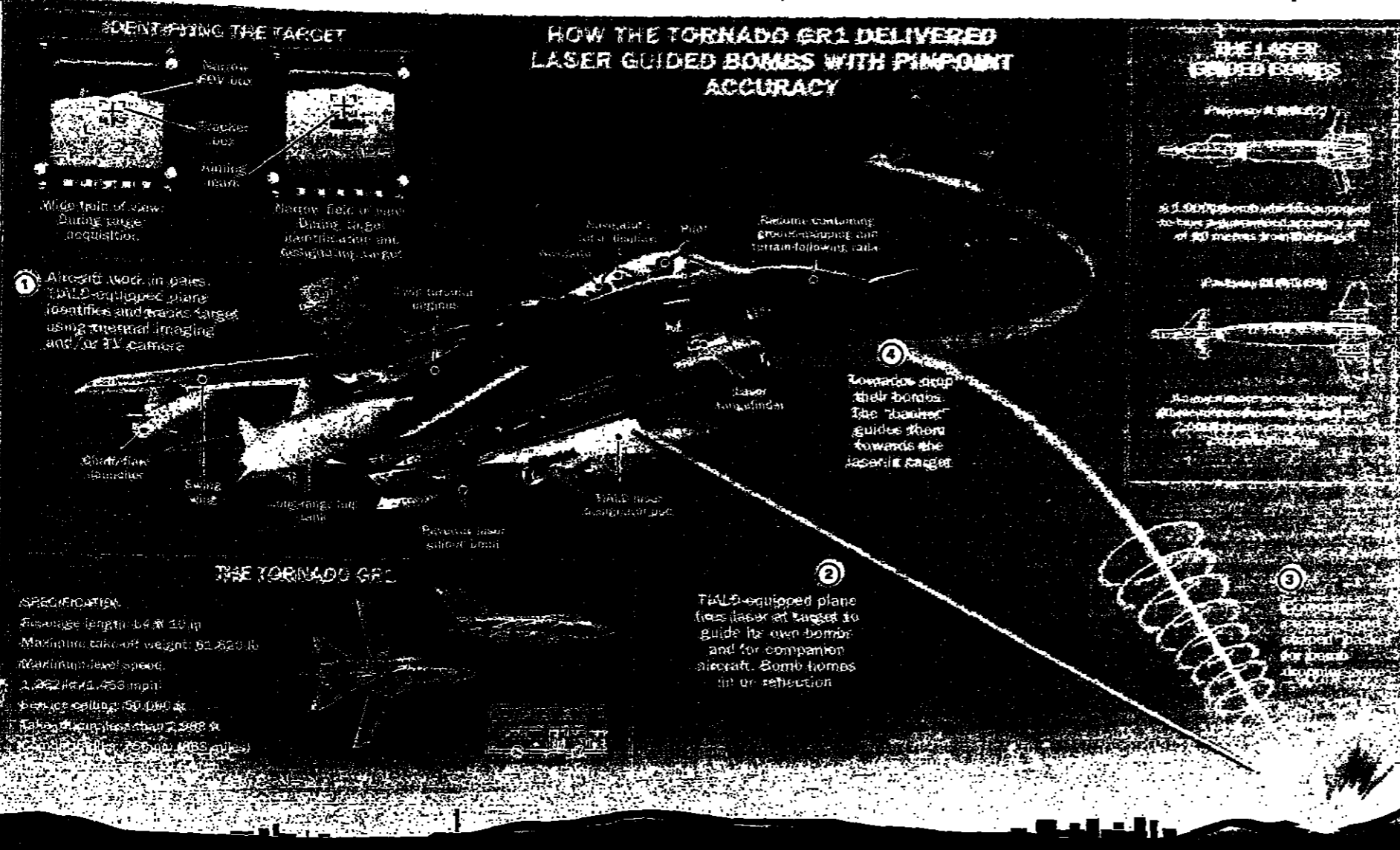
American people get things right." The aides lumbered to their feet and applauded.

As the attack orders flowed from the Pentagon to forces in the Gulf, Mr Clinton laboured over the speech he would give later from the Oval Office. Mr Cohen, a former Republican senator, was asked to call his former Republican colleagues on Capitol Hill and apprise them of the mission.

Some were furious over the timing, feeling outfoxed by Operation Desert Fox. Meanwhile, Mr Gore was deputised to tell the three living former Presidents, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and George Bush,

All day Mr Clinton shuttled between meetings. By afternoon work was spreading widely in Washington that the strikes were imminent. Trent Lott, leader of the Senate's Republican majority, took the unprecedented step of revealing the secret and saying it did not have his support because of its timing.

Shortly before 6pm, Mr Clinton was in the Oval Office, still revising the speech. No one mentioned the setting's proximity to his trysts with Monica Lewinsky in the adjoining private study. Then, with one last deep breath, the President faced a global television audience to explain why he ordered the attack.



Flying Fox that packs 2,000lb lethal punch

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

TORNADOS

THE 12 Tornado GR1s involved in the airstrikes against Iraq yesterday were equipped with advanced laser-guided bombs to guarantee accuracy and penetration power.

General Sir Charles Guthrie, the Chief of Defence Staff, said yesterday that the 1,000lb Paveway II bomb used in the raids on concrete command-and-control bunkers had a guaranteed accuracy rate of ten yards from the target, and the 2,000lb Paveway III just three yards from the target.

The Tornados flew in pairs with one equipped with a thermal imaging airborne laser designator (Tiald) to pinpoint the target. Each of the Tornados was armed with air-to-air missiles in case of an Iraqi aircraft attack, as well as two extra fuel tanks, one on each wing, with a total of four tonnes of fuel.

The history of No 12 Squadron, based in Al-Jawf in Kuwait, dates back to its formation in February 1915. During the First World War, the

squadron distinguished itself in action over many battlefields, including Loos, the Somme and Cambrai.

In 1926 the squadron was equipped with the Fairey Fox aircraft, the first metal plane, and subsequently adopted a fox's mask as a symbol of its superiority over other aircraft.

The RAF said yesterday it was a coincidence that the Americans had decided to give the operation against Iraq the codename of Desert Fox.

No 12 Squadron was converted to the Tornado GR1 in 1993, it was subsequently updated to give it a medium-level role, operating from between 15,000ft and 25,000ft.

□ Lisbon: The United States and Britain last night asked Portugal for permission to use the Lajes air force base in the Azores for operations against Iraq. In Madrid, it was announced that the American F15 fighters and the Galaxy transport planes have been using the Morón de la Frontera air base, which is near Seville. (Reuters/AFP)

Fighting is 'allowed' during the holy month of fasting

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

STRATEGY

THE approach of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month, has been a key factor in determining the timing and duration of the British and American airstrikes on Iraq.

President Clinton told the American people in his television address that he had decided to act immediately because to take action during Ramadan would be "profoundly offensive to the Arab world".

His words suggested strongly that the operation would end before Ramadan, expected

to begin on Sunday morning after the sighting of the new moon tomorrow.

Mr Clinton may have been responding to reports that there would be an outburst of anger across the Muslim world against the Allies if the attack continued into Ramadan. It is certainly a convenient pretext to convince his Republican opponents that the timing had nothing to do with the impeachment hearings. But, in fact, the onset of Ramadan makes little difference.

A senior Muslim cleric said yesterday that he opposed any attack on Iraq, regardless of whether it took place before or during the holy fasting month.

The condemnation came from Mohamed Sayeed Tawaji, Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar, the main seat of Sunni Muslim learning in Cairo. "The Grand Sheikh has said he was against all acts of aggression on the Iraqi people," Sheikh Omar Bastawisi, the spokesman, said.

According to Koranic tradition—building on pre-Islamic customs—warfare is strongly discouraged in the four lunar

months after Ramadan. But no mention is made of an injunction against fighting in the Koranic chapter (Sura al-Baqara) specifying observance of Ramadan.

"It is a month of heightened devotion, when Muslims fast during the day and should pray at night," a spokesman for the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies said.

"Any news of violence or killing is, therefore, very disturbing indeed, as it upsets the spiritual atmosphere." But he said that it was not more offensive to start a war during the holy month than it was to continue fighting one.

Diplomats note that neither Iran nor Iraq stopped fighting during Ramadan during their long war in the 1980s. And the joint Egyptian-Syrian attack on Israel in 1973 was launched during Ramadan.

By tradition the fast begins the morning after the senior Muslim in a local community sees the new moon. This, therefore, can vary according to geography, with the possible difference of a day between Morocco and Indonesia. Normally the two most influential sightings are by the Rector of al-Azhar and by the senior sheikh in Mecca. Most Muslim countries now leave the decision on the start of the month to the local ministry of religious endowments, which consults clerical authorities.

□ Britain "isolated": The Muslim Council of Britain last night expressed grave concern over the attacks on Iraq, and their "deeply offensive" timing. It said Britain had isolated itself from the international community, adding that experience had shown spasmodic bombing only added to the misery of ordinary Iraqis without achieving any of the stated objectives.



Neither the animal, above, nor the legendary German general of the same nickname influenced the naming of Operation Desert Fox, writes Giles Whittell. It was chosen using a standard Pentagon system and had more to do with the alphabet.

"We have a lot of history buffs here and they don't just pick these names out of a hat, but I don't know that any thought was put into the

Historians outfoxed

fact that the name was used before," said Major Joe Lumsden of the US Central Command in Tampa Bay. Operation Desert Thunder in its planning stages last month, the strike became known as Desert Fox once it began.



The name was one of an alphabetical group assigned to the commander of US Gulf forces. Rommel earned his nickname commanding German forces against the Eighth Army in North Africa in the Second World War.

Yesterday the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, said Operation Desert Fox should be called "Operation Villains in the Arabian Desert".

Terror threat shuts US embassies

FROM SAM KILEY IN JOHANNESBURG

SECURITY

THE United States yesterday closed all of its African missions as a security precaution after the first wave of US and British attacks on Iraq.

The move follows reports that Osama bin Laden, the Afghanistan-based terrorist, had ordered his men to carry out attacks on US installations in the next "days or weeks".

Bruce Wharton, spokesman for the US Embassy in Pretoria, said that about 50 mis-

sions had been closed and their staff ordered to "work from home" as the first cruise missiles were fired on Iraq. Only the Pretoria and Lagos embassies will continue to work as normal.

Western intelligence sources claimed Bin Laden had ordered a campaign in his jihad against America as five more of his alleged accomplices were indicted for their role in the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam embassy bombings earlier this year.

The five suspects are Mustafa Mohamed Fadhil, 22, of Egypt, Khalid Khamis Mohamed, 24, and Ahmed Khalid Ghallani, 24, from Zanzibar, and Fahid Mohammed Ali Msalam, 22, and Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan, 29, from Mombasa, Kenya.

The intelligence sources said that the non-Arab nationality of most of the suspects indicated the existence of Bin Laden's contacts in Africa and that it was a "source of some concern, indicating that he has access to many volunteers".

Analysts said yesterday that they did not see a natural alliance between Bin Laden's movement and Saddam's secular regime.

□ Embassies secured: Security at the London embassies of countries supporting the Iraq airstrikes or providing bases was stepped up yesterday by Scotland Yard (Stewart Trender writes). The Yard also reviewed cover for the US Embassy and Kuwaiti diplomatic compounds.

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مكتبة

MPs act over case of editor and MI6

Roland Watson monitors reaction at Westminster to allegations that Dominic Lawson was a spy

DOMINIC LAWSON faces protracted parliamentary scrutiny after being named in the Commons as an MI6 agent. Despite denying that he has ever acted for the security services, either in a paid or unpaid role, MPs are to pursue the allegations on a range of parliamentary fronts.

At the head of the pressure is the nine-strong Intelligence and Security Committee. Chaired by the former Tory Defence Secretary Tom King, it is one of Westminster's most high-powered and secretive bodies. Cross-party and drawn from both Lords and Commons, it meets about once a month in a room in the Cabinet Office which is protected against electronic eavesdropping.

MPs expressed deep unease yesterday at the suggestion that MI6 may regard newspaper editors as legitimate candidates for recruitment.

Mr King said there were "no present plans" to investigate the claims about Mr Lawson, but one committee source said: "It is one thing to gather

intelligence. It is quite another to have people in positions where they are influential opinion-formers. The fact that a prominent opinion-maker has been named is clearly a matter of genuine public interest and therefore a matter for inquiry by the committee."

Mr Lawson, 42, also faces moves on a range of parliamentary fronts challenging his past.

Six Labour MPs have signed a Commons motion calling for Mr Lawson to resign his editorial chair or, failing that, for Conrad Black, the *Telegraph* proprietor, to sack him.

The motion, tabled by George Galloway, the Labour MP for Glasgow Kelvin, says the sponsors are "greatly disturbed by the news that a national newspaper editor, Mr Dominic Lawson of the *Sunday Telegraph*, has for a considerable period of time served as an intelligence asset of the British security services, which paid him large sums of money into foreign bank accounts for the services he ren-



Black demand for him to sack Lawson

dered under the guise of a journalist and editor."

It adds: "His actions constitute not only a fraud upon his readership but a danger to genuine journalists, especially those working abroad."

The motion is also signed by Irene Adams (Paisley North), Jim Cunningham (Coventry South), John McAllion (Dundee East), Jimmy Wray (Glasgow Baillieston) and Jimmy Hood (Clydesdale).

Mr Galloway has also tabled two written parliamentary questions to the Prime Minister. One asks if he will "list the capacities in which Mr Do-

minic Lawson has been employed by Her Majesty's government or any agency acting on its behalf." The other asks what public funds have been paid by the Government, or anyone acting on its behalf, into a bank or banks for Mr Lawson, and for what purposes.

Mr Galloway also warned he would be prepared to use parliamentary privilege to air other allegations about Mr Lawson.

The claims originate from allegations purportedly made by Richard Tomlinson, the former MI6 officer dismissed in 1995 who subsequently served six months in prison for breaching the Official Secrets Act.

Mr Tomlinson did not name the editor. After discovering independently the identity of the editor, *The Times* ran a report of the allegations last Saturday without naming him.

Mr Lawson was named in the Commons on Wednesday by Brian Sedgemore, MP for Hackney South and Shore-ditch.

The claims centre on Mr Lawson's time as editor of *The Spectator* between 1990 and 1995. During that time Mr Lawson ran the story in 1994 that Richard Coe, the literary editor of *The Guardian*, was being paid by the KGB.



The motion says MPs are "disturbed that Mr Lawson served as an intelligence asset"

Reporters' garb is the perfect disguise for spooks

By Anthony Loyd and Tom Walker

IN THE early days of the Bosnian conflict, the intelligence war was almost as confusing as the one on the ground. The Israelis and Russians were doing business with the Serbs, while the Iranians dealt with the Croats and Bosnian Muslims. The French (usually at odds with everybody) looked after themselves and the British and Americans became locked in a struggle to dominate Nato subterfuge.

Spooks from all sides became "journalists", often by obtaining false press accreditation, to get better access to information. Though freedom of movement did become more difficult as the war progressed and each side became increasingly aware of the level of intelligence penetration, for a long time journalists had better access than any other group of foreigners.

A press card allowed one to cross front lines, speak with commanders, live with locals, check out troop dispositions, and even go into battle. The only exception may have been the remote eastern enclaves, sealed off by the Serbs. Yet even these were infiltrated by western special forces troops disguised as aid workers.

Soldiers also took on the cloak of correspondents. One Mujahidin fighter killed crossing the airport in Sarajevo in 1993 was carrying BBC accreditation. Three Arab soldiers held in Zenica for shooting a British aid worker had press accreditation as Danish radio reporters.

Kurt Schork, the veteran Reuters correspondent, said: "You have a core of recognised correspondents for television, radio and newspapers who are known commodities, but a big story like Bosnia attracts hundreds of people. Opportunistic and talented, they might be something different to what they say they are."

One reporter recalls a rival new agency's freelance photographer, who was shot by a sniper, only to return to the war and disappear into the ranks of the Bosnian Croat army fighting near Mostar. Later it was discovered that he had always carried a gun.

"The agency never touched him again," said the reporter. "Maybe he was just an adventurer, maybe he wasn't."

A month earlier, the *Sunday Telegraph* revealed that MI5 was to issue a blanket denial of any involvement in the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. The denial was contained in a new guide about the work of MI5, but at the time of the article it had not yet been published.

'Communists' allegation cost newspaper £10,000

By Michael Evans, Stephen Farrell and Carol Midgley

THE Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, who has denied an allegation that he is a paid MI6 agent, was involved in a bizarre libel suit last year involving two journalists whom his newspaper had accused of being communists.

Two Balkan experts, James Pettifer, an author and writer for *The Times*, and Miranda Vickers, an historian and writer for *The Guardian*, each received an out-of-court settlement of £10,000 and costs, as well as a published apology by the *Sunday Telegraph*.

The article in question was written by Anthony Daniels, "an observer" at the Albanian elections in 1996 and a member of an organisation called the British Helsinki Human

Rights Group. Mr Daniels also wrote articles for *The Spectator* when Mr Lawson was Editor of the weekly political magazine until 1995.

Mr Pettifer and Ms Vickers had written extensively about the corrupt government of President Berisha, who was forced out of power over the fraudulent pyramid scandal when millions of Albanians lost their private savings. The human-rights group was believed to support Berisha. So, too, did many governments and intelligence services in the West, who saw Berisha as "their man" who would keep Albania stable and help to prevent the neighbouring Yugoslav province of Kosovo from setting the whole region

alight. Mr Pettifer and Ms Vickers were singled out for harsh treatment in the *Sunday Telegraph* article, which appeared in March last year under the headline "The Media Back the Communists as Usual". The two writers had written a number of articles describing the worst excesses of the Berisha regime and advocated the wisdom of Albania having a socialist government - which duly happened when Berisha fell.

In the apology which followed in April last year, Dominic Lawson acknowledged that the article wrongly claimed that Mr Pettifer and Ms Vickers were "both supporters of the former Stalinist regime of the late Enver Hox-

SALVING CONSCIENCES IN HAMPSTEAD

Kenneth Roberts, who has been working for the UN in Bosnia for over a year, argues that we should pull out now

From *The Spectator*: challenging the media line

ha (the Cold War dictator in Albania). Yesterday Ms Vickers said: "It was certainly true that I was anti-Berisha, but that doesn't make me a communist. I was just writing what I saw to be the truth. But there were a lot of interested parties who wanted to keep Berisha in power."

Mr Pettifer said: "It was

very upsetting to be accused of being a communist when I am a member of the Church of England. Berisha was financed by foreign intelligence services and I was regarded as a nuisance because I wrote articles that criticised the Berisha regime."

The accusation that Mr Lawson was a paid agent of MI6 was reportedly made by Richard Tomlinson, the former MI6 officer who served in the Balkans during his four-year career in the Secret Intelligence Service. He was based in Bosnia. It has been claimed, though strongly denied by Mr Lawson, that he was recruited by MI6 when he was Editor of *The Spectator*.

As new allegations swirled around Mr Lawson, other articles in *The Spectator* and *Sunday Telegraph* came under the closest scrutiny. Among them

were two 1994 articles on Bosnia in *The Spectator* arguing against Western policy in the Balkans conflict. Claims were made yesterday that they were in fact written by a member of the secret services and sought to influence public opinion.

Both appeared under the name Kenneth Roberts under the dateline Sarajevo, claiming that the author had worked with the United Nations in Bosnia for more than a year, and saying only that his name "has been changed, at his request". The two articles sought to counter widespread public sympathy for the Bosnian Muslims. The first, on February 5 1994, rehearsed arguments for a UN withdrawal from the area pointing out that all sides carried out atrocities and claiming that the practice of applying sanctions and providing aid to the Serbs at the same time was driven by "a policy aimed more at salvaging consciences in Hampstead than solving problems in Bosnia".

Giving what appeared to be an insider's account, "Roberts" argued that aid was siphoned off to the military effort by Serbs, Croats and Muslims alike and that pulling the UN out would inject a note of urgency to peace talks. "The idea of withdrawal offends the

international conscience, but that conscience has for too long overridden the needs of the Bosnian people as a determinant of policy," he wrote.

On March 5, his second piece complained about the power of the media to shape public responses to the conflict, accusing the BBC's Kate Adie of broadcasting "warped" and inaccurate reports of an atrocity against the Bosnian Muslims.

It was also claimed yesterday that *The Spectator*, under Mr Lawson's editorship, ran columns written by a senior former MI6 officer under the alias Alan Judd.

The *Sunday Telegraph*, which is staunchly right-wing, has published numerous articles and leaders supporting the work of the intelligence services. In a leader published last August, the newspaper launched a vitriolic attack on the former MI6 agent David Shayler, describing him as "pungent and preposterous" and a "useless idiot".

A month earlier, the *Sunday Telegraph* revealed that MI5 was to issue a blanket denial of any involvement in the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. The denial was contained in a new guide about the work of MI5, but at the time of the article it had not yet been published.

Such war zone chameleons melt easily into the confusing hotchpotch of diplomats, aid workers, mercenaries and media, flitting between different groups, gathering information, and disappearing from one conflict to reappear somewhere else in another guise.

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Former nun tells of hotel sex with priest

Shirley English hears a libel trial witness describe affair that ended with a broken promise of marriage

A FORMER nun described yesterday how she lost her virginity to a Roman Catholic priest who she says broke his vow of celibacy to have sex with her during a year-long affair.

Caroline Brown, 38, said that their relationship ended in "heartbreak and tears" when he failed to fulfil his promise to leave the priesthood and marry her.

Mrs Brown was giving evidence at the Court of Session, Edinburgh, in a defamation trial involving Father Noel Barry, 42, press secretary to Cardinal Thomas Winning, the leader of Scotland's Roman Catholics. He and another woman, Annie Clinton, 50, are suing *The Sun* over an article in 1996 alleging that they had a sexual affair.

The Sun called Mrs Brown as a key defence witness after discovering that she had been involved with the priest in the 1980s. She told the court that said she had not wanted to be a witness, but had received a citation three weeks ago.

She said that she had always sought to protect her family's privacy, and that when first approached by journalists she had consulted Cardinal Winning for advice, but found him to be unsympathetic.

Mrs Brown's testimony was

intended to cast doubt on Father Barry's credibility. Last week under oath he confessed that he had once been in love with the former nun, but denied having ever had sexual intercourse with her, or any other woman.

Mrs Brown said yesterday: "I believe he is lying under oath about our relationship." Later she added: "I have no reason to lie. I am here to tell the total truth."

The court was told that the couple were first introduced in 1981 when she was a 21-year-old Franciscan nun and he a young priest in his 30s. From the very beginning he flirted with her, she said.

In 1982, after five years as a nun, she left the religious order and did not see the priest again until 1984 in a chance meeting at a Mass after a friend's wedding. They were instantly attracted to each other, she said, and exchanged phone numbers.

Over the course of that summer they fell in love and began meeting secretly under cover of darkness in the Campsie Hills, outside Glasgow, where they spent time until the early hours. She described the relationship as physical, but said they did not have sexual intercourse until they spent two



Father Noel Barry: suing over sex allegation

days at a hotel in January 1985.

"We loved each other," she said. "It was all very cloak and dagger. He told me if he had met me before he was ordained, he would not have become ordained."

Asked whether the relationship was platonic or sexual before the hotel trip, she said: "Initially there was not full sexual intercourse. Just heavy petting. We discussed what would happen if I became pregnant. He always wore condoms and he always told me not to worry, that he always withdrew. I had no previous sexual experience. I didn't know what full sexual intercourse was."

Later that year Father Barry went to Rome for a time and wrote passionate love letters to her, read out in court, in which

he referred to their time in the hills but cautioned her to tell no one.

Then, eager "to wake up together", they spent two days at the Crest Hotel in Preston. "We both knew what we wanted and before we left we looked at each other and we made love. We had full sexual intercourse. We were extremely happy," she said.

Afterwards, she said, Father Barry gave her a ring and set up a bank account to save for their future together. She said that they continued to meet and had sex on numerous occasions, but the affair began to falter when his promise to leave the priesthood and marry her failed to materialise.

"I did not want to spend my life waiting. He told me he loved me but did nothing about it. He was the first big love of my life and made me all sorts of promises." By the end of 1985 the relationship was over.

Mrs Brown, who now works for the Royal National Institute for the Blind, embarked on a new life and married in 1991. She now has two young children. She had no further contact with the priest.

Father Barry sat next to Miss Clinton throughout yesterday's evidence and hardly glanced at the witness box. He is alleging that *The Sun's* article implied that he was a hypocrite and unfit to be a priest because he had a sexual relationship with Miss Clinton.

The trial continues.



Caroline Brown outside court yesterday: she described losing her virginity to Father Barry

Egyptian accuses club boss of racism

By Tim Jones

AN EGYPTIAN swimming pool attendant at an exclusive health club yesterday accused the manager of a campaign of racial abuse in which he once printed his name beneath the picture of a camel.

Sherif Yagubi told an employment tribunal that Peter Jones, his boss at the Roehampton Club, Richmond, southwest London, had described him as nothing more than a lavatory cleaner and said that Egyptians were dishonest and stank.

Mr Yagubi, 28, has worked at the club, which costs £2,500 to join, for seven years. He said that, when he complained about his treatment, he was told his work was poor and was given a final warning.

He claimed Mr Jones also made derogatory remarks about blacks and mixed-race couples, and told vile jokes about black women.

Giving evidence to the tribunal, at Croydon, Mr Jones denied being a racist and said he had no knowledge of the camel postcard under which he was said to have written Mr Yagubi's name. He described Mr Yagubi, who still works for the club on a salary of £10,700, as "difficult" and said that he had been given a final warning because he would not cover shifts for other people, spent too much time talking to friends on the telephone and was often absent.

The hearing continues.

Harrods owner settles claim with bodyguard

By Michael Harvey

MOHAMED AL FAYED yesterday settled an industrial tribunal claim with a former bodyguard whom he had blamed for the deaths of his son, Dodi, and Diana, Princess of Wales.

After a first day of evidence, Kes Wingfield reached a settlement with the Harrods chairman thought to be worth about £40,000.

Mr Wingfield and Trevor Rhys-Jones had been responsible for the Princess and Dodi Fayed's security while they were in Paris. Mr Al Fayed blamed the bodyguards for causing the crash by not following safety rules.

Mr Wingfield, 32, a former Royal Marine, has insisted it was on Dodi's orders that he got into a decoy car instead of the one carrying the couple, driven by Henri Paul. He has told the French magistrate investigating the crash that he

had previously begged his employer for six extra minutes to protect the Princess.

The tribunal in Central London was told that Mr Al Fayed asked Mr Wingfield to spread conspiracy rumours about the crash in a television documentary. Mr Wingfield has said he did not want to be involved as he did not believe they had been murdered. The tribunal was told that a furious Mr Al Fayed told him: "Do it for me or you will be looking for another job."

Mr Wingfield finally resigned in June this year after seven years' service on Mr Al Fayed's protection team. He said he was forced to quit because Mr Al Fayed had broken the bond of trust between them. He claimed unfair dismissal and breach of contract.

Yesterday, however, in a joint statement as part of the settlement, Mr Wingfield

withdrew the specific allegation that Mr Al Fayed asked him to lie.

A joint statement said: "The parties accept that in good faith their recollections differ about the circumstances leading to Mr Wingfield's resignation. Both parties expressed the wish that the full truth about the facts surrounding the deaths of Diana, Princess of Wales and Dodi Fayed will emerge from the inquiry being conducted by the magistrate in France."

Jane Mason, the tribunal chairman, said: "It is the order of the tribunal that by consent these proceedings have been stayed. That seems to be a sensible resolution."

Mr Rhys-Jones is suing his former employer for £1 million over the crash, claiming that the Ritz Hotel in Paris was guilty of endangering the lives of others.

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Judge's lapse could lead to bench 'vetting'

THE law lords' decision yesterday to set aside one of their own rulings in the Pinochet affair could pave the way for a succession of American-style challenges over judges' interests and affiliations.

Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, moved swiftly in his capacity as head of the judiciary to ensure that law lords declare their interests in the future. He released a letter written to Lord Browne-Wilkinson, the senior law lord, seeking immediate action "to ensure that such a state of affairs could not occur again".

In future, he said, when a committee of law lords was being composed, the proposed members should consider "whether any of their number might appear to be subject to a conflict of interest; and in order to ensure the impartiality, and the appearance of impartiality, of the committee, require any law lord to disclose any such circumstances to the parties and not sit if any party objects and the committee so determines".

But more declarations by judges of their interests could prompt more challenges — or "anarchy", according to Alan Jones, QC, counsel for the Spanish Government, which is seeking General Pinochet's extradition. It could mean litigants seeking to "cherry-pick" a bench for a particular appeal, and judges being asked to stand down for their known political beliefs or even those of their wives.

Lord Ackner, a retired law lord, said that there was a risk that judges in future would have to declare "even if they had been a Boy Scout". He added: "There is a great danger that we will soon have the American position that newly initiated judges are cross-examined as to their views and interests and so on."

Judges and lawyers were split over the implications of Lord Hoffman's lapse, which has implications well beyond his own personal career. A senior judge said: "It is terribly sad, because actually he

REPERCUSSIONS

Top lawyers are united that the law lords' ruling has shaken the system, reports Frances Gibb

is a great fellow. But everyone is baffled as to how he failed to declare his link to Amnesty. It is a disaster area for the law lords."

One QC said: "It does make his position very difficult. I would have thought I think he probably forgot [to mention his Amnesty connection] or thought everyone knew."

Sir Frederick Lawton, a retired Court of Appeal judge, said: "I feel terribly sorry for him because he is a good chap and he's got a great legal mind." He added: "He has a completely legal mind. He saw the problem as the construction of a statute, which it was — and so he put everything else out of his mind."

But he added that Lord Hoffman might well consider it appropriate to resign. "Lenny, being a very sensitive character, will take the view that he has gone very wrong over this and that it is going to be the subject of criticism."

However, Lord Lane, the former Lord Chief Justice, said that he did not believe it a

signing matter. "He made a mistake and it does not do any good at all. But I would not have thought it was a matter for resigning. We could do with ten Lord Hoffmanns."

Some lawyers said that much more detailed guidance would be necessary than the Lord Chancellor's letter of exhortation, extending even to guidance from the Lord Chief Justice.

Judges and lawyers were united, however, in the view that Lord Hoffman's mistake had rocked the judicial system, causing it profound dismay and embarrassment only mitigated by the prompt and unanimous decision of the five law lords in setting aside the original decision.

But there were also fears that the ruling had set the wheels in motion for a revolution in the way judges do their work, are seen to do it and in how they are selected.

Robert Stevens, Master of Pembroke College and author of *A History of the Law Lords as a Judicial Body*, predicted long-term implications for the way judges are appointed and operate. There would also need to be much clearer separation of powers, he added. The Lord Chancellor, who can sit as a member of the House of Lords while being a member of the executive, would find his position under scrutiny.

At the heart of yesterday's ruling was the belief that justice must not only be done but must be seen to be done.

The phrase was coined by Lord Chief Justice Hewart in 1924 and became so embedded in the workings of the legal system that 20 years ago newly appointed judges automatically resigned all membership of societies, political or social clubs.

Over the years, that practice has largely stopped because of a growing view that judges should not be closeted from the ordinary world and should be like everyone else.

Instead, they are meant to declare any interest in a case which comes before them.



Lord Hoffman yesterday in Hong Kong, where he is sitting as a senior lord of appeal

Strong-willed maverick was poised to be a legend

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

LORD HOFFMANN was the law lord tipped by most lawyers to become a judicial legend. But they did not consider that he would go down in legal history as the judge who caused a ruling from the highest court in the land to be set aside.

Yesterday, as MPs demanded that he consider his position over failing to declare his links with Amnesty International before the historic Pinochet ruling, Lord Hoffman was half a world away.

The man described as the "most dominant personality in the Lords by a mile" was in Hong Kong.

Well away from the furor he has sparked in legal and political circles. He was sitting there as a senior lord of appeal — one of two British judges entrusted to rotate to the new Final Court of Appeal set up when the colony was handed back to China.

Lord "Lenny" Hoffman is one of the most popular senior judges. He is convivial and witty — a popular socialiser whose eye for attractive women has in the past earned him the nickname "Legover Lenny".

Friendly and flirtatious, he can often be found among the last hangers-on at any social function, animatedly engaged in conversation. But his 1957 marriage to Gillian Sterner, who works for Amnesty, remains strong: they have two grown daughters (one is a barrister, one an accountant) and live in Hampstead in an elegant house in Keats Grove. They also have a cottage in Chedworth, Gloucestershire.

For all his charm and ease of manner, he has a brilliant intellect that has seen him rise swiftly to the top of the legal profession. Born in Cape Town in 1934 and the son of a Jewish lawyer, Leonard Hubert Hoffman obtained his BA in South Africa, then went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar to read law. He practised in his native South Africa for a couple of years, before he was

called to Gray's Inn in 1964, took silk in 1977, became a High Court judge in 1985, a Court of Appeal judge in 1992 and a law lord in 1995.

By the mid-1980s, as one of the most highly paid silks at the Bar — earning an estimated £500,000 a year — he was a familiar face at places such as Stirling House.

But his brilliance can show itself in tough, even arrogant, questioning of counsel; in the recent challenge to the law lords' Pinochet decision, he was accused of such hostile questioning of counsel for the former dictator. But in the legal world, he is loved rather than hated, a strong-minded maverick who adds colour to the stuffiness of the Temple with his eccentricities and outspokenness. He is fiercely fit and cycled in skin-tight lycra peddle pushers and red polka-dot top in 1994 some 1,200 miles from London to Barcelona to raise £8,000 for St Hil-da's College, Oxford.

His intellectual integrity is beyond doubt, say friends. They point to the Privy Council ruling in the case of the alleged murderer Trevor Nathaniel Fisher in 1997, in which he joined the majority in ruling that the man be executed. Lord Hoffman decided that neither the delay nor the prison conditions constituted a breach of human rights. Lawyers argue that this shows his innate liberalism is no guarantee that he will take a human rights line: he strictly applies the law.

The magazine *Legal Business* recently described him as "the most dominant personality in the Lords today by a mile, significantly outscoring the others in the number of leading judgments he has given" and with a tendency to "carry the rest of the court with him."

Yesterday, as he sat in Hong Kong, he must sorely have regretted that, far from carrying his colleagues with him, he is very much out on a limb.

MAN IN THE NEWS

keep open

'There is a risk that judges in future will have to declare even they have been Boy Scouts'

A rather uncomfortable day on the Woolsack

Alan Hamilton witnesses history, and mild embarrassment, in a distinctly subdued Upper House

FOR all its ceremonial and funny frocks, the House of Lords can also be very down-to-earth and matter-of-fact, even when creating small moments of history. There is, of course, the embarrassment factor: you don't pile on the pageant when you are admitting a mistake.

Some 30 peers, all distinctly subdued save the lone figure of the Bishop of Ely in his episcopal costume, were present for prayers in the Upper House at 10.30am yesterday. But what they were really there for was the ensuing five minutes.

Above their heads, the public gallery was somewhat sparsely populated by about 20 Chileans, far fewer than on previous episodes of the same drama. The Pinochet saga has now been dragging on for so long that even those close to it may be feeling the first waves of ennui.

In place of the bewigged Lord Chancellor, the fat red Woolsack was occupied by Lord Browne-Wilkinson, the senior law lord, dark-suited and unwigged. At the invitation of the Clerk of the Parliaments, he rose to his feet and, at a fair gallop, read a prepared script. A High Court



General Pinochet's lawyers leaving the Lords yesterday

THE LORDS

two, their lordships had ruled that General Pinochet was not immune from arrest and extradition.

Then he got to the embarrassing bit, reciting the facts of his fellow-peer Lord Hoffman's connections with Amnesty. The House listened with no visible sign of animation beyond one peer adopting the familiar semi-recumbent posture that allows elderly ears closer contact with public address speakers in the backs of the benches.

Finally, Lord Browne-Wilkinson reached the nub of his address: "I am satisfied that the earlier decision of this House cannot stand and must be set aside." It was an unprecedented view with which to

confront their lordships, but there was not so much as a squeak of dissent. Even in the public gallery it was received, outwardly at least, with mute dispassion; the public had had a brief lecture on how to behave itself before being let in.

One by one Lord Browne-Wilkinson's four suited and bare-headed colleagues rose to their feet to express their concurrence. "I agree," said Lord Goff of Chieveley, and sat down again. "I also agree," said Lords Hope of Craighead, Nolan and Hutton in quick succession.

There was, for the moment, to be no further explanation. "It is impossible in the time available to prepare and give full reasons; on the other hand it is essential that the parties should know where they stand as soon as possible," Lord Browne-Wilkinson said.

It came quickly to the vote on whether to overturn their previous ruling, an uncomfortable thing to have to do. But their lordships are men and women of steel and of honour who do not pussyfoot even at times like these. The contents murmured their ayes, the not contents, if any there were, remained entirely silent.

Their lordships' previous decision was thereby, in their own parlance, vacated, and they will spend discussing it again until mid-January.

Back to the beginning, says Chile

FOREIGN REACTION

CHILE responded cautiously to yesterday's ruling. During a graduation ceremony at the Military School in Santiago, President Eduardo Frei said: "It seems logical that this situation should be wrapped up." But he added testily that "it doesn't seem reasonable, after two months of agitation and commotion in Chile, Britain and Spain, that we are back at the point we started from."

At the same ceremony the army chief, General Ricardo Izurieta, said: "As long as the general is not on national territory, the army will not rest."

The Foreign Minister, José Miguel Insulza, said: "This whole affair has been full of surprises. It would be better not to make too many predictions." The president of Chile's Chamber of Deputies,

Gutierrez Martinez, termed the decision "reasonable". During a lobbying visit to Madrid, Andres Zaldivar, speaker of the Chilean Senate, welcomed the ruling and said: "What has happened today inspires new hope that this matter can be resolved in London."

The Spanish judge seeking the extradition reacted with surprise to the ruling. But Judge Baltasar Garçon was confident that the decision would not derail his two-year investigation. A court source said: "The judge received the news with surprise, but he is not concerned because it does not affect the proceedings he is conducting in Spain." The Spanish For-

eign Minister, Abel Matutes, reaffirmed his government's pledge to respect all judicial decisions in the Pinochet affair.

Carlos Stepiy, a lawyer for families of the Pinochet regime, expressed disappointment at the new ruling, but said: "This is not the final word." Manuel Oñe, another human rights lawyer involved in the case, called the ruling little more than an inconvenience.

General Pinochet's son and daughter are to arrive in London shortly with their families, for a "solemn Christmas get-together" at the residence where he is being held. His son, also named Augusto, said: "His arrest and the humiliating treatment he has faced has ruined our Christmas, but we will still gather for a meal and spend time as a family."

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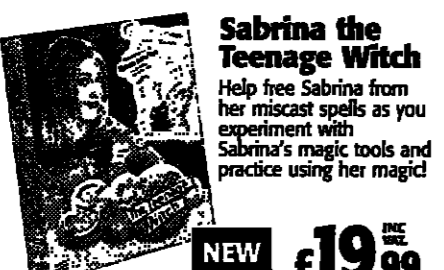
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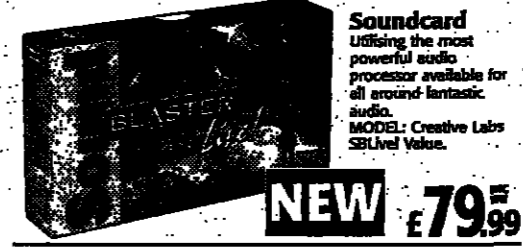
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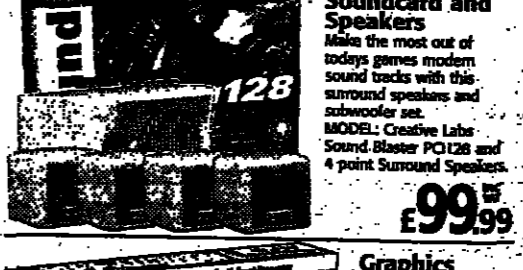
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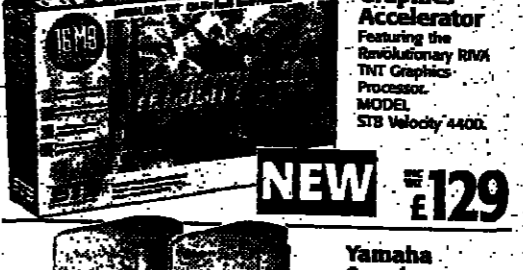
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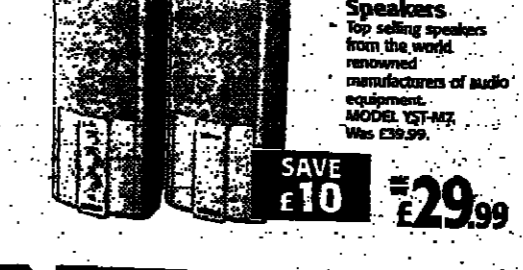
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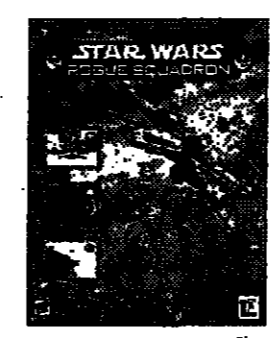
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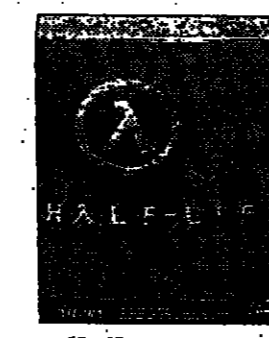
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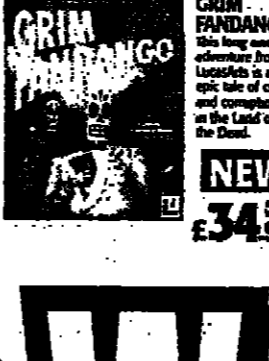
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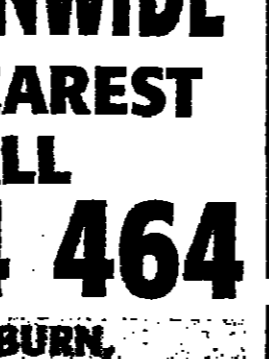
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Mother spare for kidney baby
A MOTHER... will not be... mother spare for kidney baby...

Strings attached to opera fund
BY ROBIN YOUNG... Council gave... strings attached to opera fund...

Two's company for BBC's top woman

Carol Midgley reports on the pioneer who is taking control of BBC2

THE BBC appointed a woman as controller of one of its television channels for the first time yesterday. Jane Root, who was responsible for the screening of the gritty drama series *Cops* and the Victoria Wood comedy *Dinnerladies*, is the new head of BBC2.

The appointment will be seen as part of moves by the Director-General, Sir John Birt, to counter allegations that the BBC is run by a gang of men in grey suits. The job carries a salary of about £120,000 and Ms Root will be in charge of an annual budget of £372 million.

Ms Root, 41, from Southend, Essex, graduated in international relations at Sussex University and began her broadcasting career as a Channel 4 researcher. She said: "BBC2 is incredibly strong at the moment, it is having a brilliant run. I would have to be a mad woman to come in with some kind of slash-and-burn policy and try and change things. I

want to build on the many strengths it has already got. "I don't think I was offered the job because I am a woman. Running BBC2 is a huge responsibility, whether you are male or female. The breadth, quality and sometimes sheer audacity of its creative talent is unparalleled on British TV."

She succeeds Mark Thompson, who has been promoted

to director of national and regional broadcasting. Ms Root, who is single, said that she was aiming to build on the main strengths of BBC2, which she identified as shows such as the comedy *Goodness Gracious Me*, *The Royle Family* and *Cops*.

She currently runs the BBC's independent commissioning group, which buys programmes from the independent sector. Before that, she was

joint managing director of the independent Wall To Wall Television company, based in the cutting room of a converted wedding dress factory in Kenish Town, North London. Among its successful programmes were *The Muriel Show*, presented by Muriel Gray, and *Baby, It's You*. Recently, at the BBC, she negotiated next year's move for the National Lottery programme to an independent producer.

Alan Yentob, Director of BBC Television, said: "Jane has the experience and confidence to lead a channel of innovation and ambition." Sir John is also said to have been enthusiastic about the promotion of Jenny Abramsky to Director of BBC Radio.

The Channel 5 newsreader Kirsty Young may fill the slot left vacant by Trevor McDonald at 10pm on weekdays. The channel is considering moving its main news programme at 10pm when ITV's *News at Ten* is axed in the new year.



Victoria Wood's *Dinnerladies*: Root brought them to BBC



Jane Root, who began with independent companies: "BBC2 quality is unparalleled"

GP accepts £50,000 for libel by partners

A GP accepted £50,000 in libel damages from his partners yesterday over imputations that he had committed such serious and gross acts of misconduct as to warrant his expulsion from the practice.

A press release issued on the partners' behalf in July last year said that Barry Robinson was acting improperly and unfairly in the litigation seeking his expulsion from the practice in Lyme Regis, Dorset.

Christopher Marsh, Dr Robinson's solicitor, told Mr Justice Popplewell at the High Court in London that it would be hard to imagine more damaging accusations to level against a medical practitioner.

Dr Robinson had concluded that he had no choice but to bring defamation proceedings if he was to vindicate his good name and prevent the destruction of his career.

Andrew Llewelyn, Lindsay Slater and Forbes Watson — his partners in The Lyme Practice — and Peter Wardley, the former unit deputy manager, had paid £50,000 into court in satisfaction of Dr Robinson's claim for damages.

Assault doctor 'not fit to practise'

A PSYCHIATRIST who preyed on vulnerable women in Canada, and fled the country before a disciplinary hearing could be held, was yesterday ordered to be struck off the medical register after a four-day hearing in London.

Kwabena Akuffo-Akoto, 48, of Ilford, Essex, was labelled "a complete disgrace to the medical profession" by the professional conduct committee of the General Medical Council.

Sir Herbert Duthie, the chairman, said the committee had concluded that "you are not fit to enjoy the privilege of registration and you are not fit to practise as a doctor." The committee have asked me to inform you that they are disgusted by your behaviour and that you are a complete disgrace to the medical profession.

Three of Akuffo-Akoto's victims sobbed and hugged in the public gallery as the decision was announced.

The offences occurred while he was working in New Brunswick, Canada, in 1996 and 1997. They included playing a woman with alcohol and having sex with her after she passed out.

After fleeing the country, Akuffo-Akoto obtained a job with the South Kent Community Health Care Trust — now the East Kent Community NHS Trust — working at the Arundel Mental Health Unit in Ashford and in Folkestone. He lied on his CV by claiming that he was still registered in Canada, and also failed to reveal his suspension during interviews.



Akuffo-Akoto: branded a disgrace to profession

Mother is spared jail for killing baby son

A MOTHER has been told she will not go to prison for the manslaughter of her 29-week-old son.

Alison Price, 25, of Cotgrave, Nottinghamshire, pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of Ethan Hindson last July.

Nottingham Crown Court was told that Price suffers from Munchausen's syndrome by proxy — a condition that caused her to harm the infant in an attempt to get attention for herself. Mr Justice Smedley told Price that she faced assessment for treatment for her personality disorder as opposed to prison.

The court was told that Ethan had failed to gain weight after he was born and while Price was looking after him in Nottingham's Queen's Medical Centre.

Peter Joyce, QC, for the prosecution, said Price had given the child under-strength feeds in an attempt to prolong the time he would remain in hospital. He said: "She enjoyed the attention from the medical staff."

Some time later mother and baby were sent home, but on July 9 she went to a neighbour's home with the dead child in her arms. Mr Joyce said: "A post-mortem examination found that Ethan had died of brain injuries caused by shaking or smothering."

When questioned by police Price said the baby had turned on to his face while in bed and suffocated on his mattress.

Philip Shears, QC, for Price, said that the root of her problems came from the abuse she had suffered at the hands of men. He said: "The child became the unwitting object of her unconscious retaliation towards men because of what had happened in her past."

Reading from a medical report Mr Shears added: "Price sought contact for herself through her child: for her it was vital that this contact continued."

Mr Justice Smedley said: "I take the view that at the time Ethan died you were a sick woman." Sentencing was deferred for medical assessment. Price was remanded in custody.

Strings attached to opera funding

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE Arts Council gave generous, though conditional, support yesterday to the new management at the Royal Opera House with increased funding for the next three years.

In response, Bernard Haitink, the Royal Opera's music director, rescinded the resignation that he had announced in protest at the company's virtual closure in the coming year. Some elements of the 1999 programme have now been salvaged.

The ROH, always the Arts Council's most costly and contentious client, has its grant lifted by 11 per cent to £16 million in the coming year and is then offered £20 million in each of the two subsequent years. In return, the opera house has pledged to raise £100 million from private

money, to cut the price of many seats by a fifth, and to offer more access to its educational programmes and workshop performances.

The council's budget also gives large increases to many other arts organisations chosen for their record of "excellence and innovation". The more generous grants come from an extra £30 million provided by the Government and announced by the Culture Secretary this week.

Gerry Robinson, chairman of the Arts Council, said the increased cash for the ROH was based on a "genuine turnaround in their attitude". The main objective was to get the new opera house in Covent Garden open on time and, within budget, producing world-class opera and ballet.

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Animal activists face ban as terrorists

Richard Ford reports on Jack Straw's plans for wider powers to curb groups involved in violent crime

ANIMAL rights extremists and religious cults face bans under proposals to strengthen anti-terrorist laws. The Government also plans to adopt the FBI's definition of terrorism as being violent acts carried out by groups such as militant computer hackers and some anti-abortionists.

The extension of powers to prosecute organisations, which currently apply to Irish terrorist groups, would make it an offence to raise funds for a banned organisation involved in domestic terrorist acts. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, also disclosed yesterday that the Government is to issue a consultation

paper on whether evidence gathered from phone-tapping should be admissible in cases involving terrorism and serious crime. Mr Straw said that it was time to introduce modern, robust counter-terrorist legislation on a permanent footing. Unveiling a consultation document to overhaul existing anti-terrorist laws, which have to be renewed annually, he said that additional measures were needed to combat other forms of domestic and international terrorism. The new definition of terrorism is

copied from the FBI and would read: "The use of serious violence against persons or property, or the threat to use such violence, to intimidate or coerce a government, the public, or any section of the public for political, religious or ideological ends." The aim of the new definition is to provide the authorities with measures to deal with domestic terrorism such as violent acts by animal rights groups. At present, the definition can be used either in relation to terrorism linked with Northern Ireland or in

relation to both Irish terrorism and international terrorism. The new definition would cover Irish and international terrorism but would also include causing serious disruption resulting from attacks on computer installations, electronic data or the public utilities. "The extension of the definition will enable counter-terrorist provisions to be used against, for example, animal rights activists who perpetrate serious acts of terrorist violence," Mr Straw said last night. "We propose to frame the new definition so that it is flexible enough to cover any terrorist threats which might develop in future, whether due to new causes or ideals or to terrorist use of technology."

It would enable counter-terrorist measures to be deployed against any groups which copy militant US anti-abortion activists who have bombed clinics and violent religious cults. The paper, entitled *Legislation Against Terrorism*, says that once an organisation was banned, it would become an offence to raise money for it, a move which could hit the funding of militant animal rights organisations. The consultation paper confirms that the Government is to end exclusion orders under which people suspected of involvement in Irish terrorism could be banned from entering Britain or Northern Ireland. But the paper makes clear that the Government has not yet decided whether the special power to detain people for seven days without charge should be reduced to four. It is considering allowing judicial involvement in applications for an ex-

tension to detain a terrorist suspect for more than 48 hours. The document also proposes to phase out non-jury courts which are used to try most serious terrorist offences in Northern Ireland and to give police the power to seize cash being taken out of a country where there is reasonable ground to believe it is being used for terrorist purposes. Ministers are also considering whether the offence of giving or receiving training in the making of firearms or explosives should be extended to include chemical, biological and nuclear materials as weapons.

Iraqi hijackers are freed because they acted under duress

By ADAM FRESCO

SIX Iraqis jailed for hijacking an aircraft in an attempt to escape torture or death from Saddam Hussein's regime were freed and cleared by the Court of Appeal yesterday. Despite their conviction being quashed, the men were still being held in prison last night while the Home Office determined whether they should be allowed to stay in Britain.

The Court of Appeal heard that the judge in the original 1997 Old Bailey trial wrongly prevented the jury from considering their defence that they acted "under duress of circumstances".

The Presiding appeal judge, Lord Justice Rose, said: "If Anne Frank had stolen a car to escape from Amsterdam and had been charged with theft, the tenets of English law would not have denied her the defence of duress of circumstances on the grounds she should have waited the Gestapo's knock on the door." The six men, who had received sentences of between five to nine years for hijacking, forced a Sudanese Airbus to di-

vert from Jordan to Stansted airport, Essex, where they sat on the tarmac with 197 passengers and crew for 20 hours. They eventually surrendered peacefully. Home Office officials last night said that they had not had enough time to interview the men to decide whether they should be granted temporary admission to the country. Eman Omar, solicitor for the men said: "As far as we are concerned the authorities have had two years to interview these men and this is totally inappropriate. They have been in jail now for 839 days. They should be freed and then called back to be interviewed by the authorities. Under the Home Office's own policy, Iraqi nationals are not detained and are usually granted temporary admission."

The six men, all Shi'ite Muslims from southern Iraq, have separate addresses in London. They had offended against Saddam's regime and were fugitives in Sudan when they hijacked the aircraft. Armed with knives and "grenades" that were in fact disguised

mustard bottles filled with salt, they terrified the passengers and crew for 20 hours. At their trial Mr Justice Wright accepted that they were in fear of a cruel, unjust and pyramidal regime. But he ruled that, for the defence of duress to be considered, there had to be a close connection in time between the feared threat of injury and the criminal act committed by the defendants. Yesterday Lord Justice Rose, sitting with Mr Justice Roulger and Mr Justice Johnson, said the law on the defence of duress was imprecise and the court had some sympathy with the trial judge, who was led into error.

They quashed the hijacking convictions and sentences and refused a prosecution request for a retrial. The six men, Adnan Hoshan, 40, Saheb Aboud, 32, Hassan Hassan, 35, Mohammed Muhsein, 40, Mustafa Hussan, 34, Majed Nagi, 37, all denied hijacking the jet between August 25 and 28, 1996. Hoshan had been jailed for nine years. Muhsein and Aboud for seven years and the other three for five.

Branson's balloon will brave airstrikes

FROM SUSIE STEINIER IN MARRAKECH

RICHARD BRANSON was last night preparing to fly his hot air balloon within 50 miles of Iraq's northern border, braving American and British air strikes in his third attempt to circumnavigate the globe.

The Virgin tycoon, his fellow millionaire Steve Fossett, and their pilot, Per Lindstrand, could be near the no-fly zone within 48 hours of their planned early morning take-off today. "We've all got parachutes," Branson joked yesterday at the launch site in Marrakech, Morocco. "At the moment we miss Iraq by 50 to 100 miles and we think that is quite wise. The three of us feel that the risks are acceptable and we have one of the best weather windows we have ever seen for a trans-global drift." Flight technicians say that the chances of the balloon drifting in off its course are slim, yet a few days ago the jetstream that Mr Branson hopes will take him over Central Asia was running over northern Iraq. It then moved 200 miles north of the border, but on Wednesday moved nearer again. "It will go



Richard Branson, right, and Per Lindstrand yesterday: they are likely to be flying higher than most warplanes

further away now," said Mr Lindstrand. Should the adventurers drift into the airstrike zone, they would be a similar altitude to American reconnaissance planes — about 30,000 feet — and higher than other warplanes operating at 15,000 to 20,000 feet. The Virgin team, which began inflating its 176ft balloon last night, plans to catch

250mph jetstream currents as a combination of helium and hot air keeps them aloft. Mr Branson, 48, said that the Government had not warned him to change his course. "They will know that there are a number of balloons attempting to fly around the world," he said. The bright silver ICO Global balloon, twice the height

of Nelson's Column, is expected to be near Iraq for about two hours, travelling at 120mph. It can change course only by dropping out of the jetstream to search for other air currents. If the jetstream carries it according to plan, the balloon will cross the Atlas Mountains to Algeria, Libya and the tip of Syria. It will then skirt

Iraq and Iran, and cross Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Burma and Laos en route to the south China sea. The team hopes then to cross the Pacific — a feat first achieved by Mr Branson a few years ago — to America. Mr Branson's is one of eight teams are competing in a race to circumnavigate the globe by balloon.

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THE TIMES FRIDAY DECEMBER 18 1998

New Sm... could i... screen

A bet... of mak... may c... to an... scari... Jan...

Business Havman: a new testing feature

Chocohol... eat their w... to longer l...

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

Big sweets in moderation give you an extra year of life expectancy than low-sugar confectionery, researchers claim.

Over the five years of the study, 75 per cent of the elderly men with 5.0 per cent or more fat in their bodies died.

"As with life," they say, "it seems to be just the right amount of a treat that makes a difference."

The scientists found that the same men who ate chocolate twice a week had a life expectancy that was 1.5 years longer than those who ate none.

The scientists also found that the men who ate chocolate had a lower risk of heart disease.

They say that the men who ate chocolate had a lower risk of heart disease because they were eating more fruit and vegetables.

The scientists also found that the men who ate chocolate had a lower risk of heart disease because they were eating more fruit and vegetables.

US teams iso... asthma trigg...

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

Key culprit in triggering asthma attacks has been identified by two American scientists. They have found that a messenger molecule called histamine is co-ordinated by the immune system through a central part of the brain in the narrowing of airways in asthma.

The scientists say that the messenger molecule is co-ordinating the action of the immune system to prevent asthma attacks. They say that the messenger molecule is co-ordinating the action of the immune system to prevent asthma attacks.

New smear test could improve screening

A better method of making slides may open way to automated scanning, writes Ian Murray

A NEW method of making slides for cervical smears, which will eliminate the hit-and-miss nature of current testing, is under trial in Britain.

The present method has not been changed in 50 years, so improvements in detection of cancer have relied on improved training and quality control. The new test, already approved in America, will open the way for the use of automated scanning devices and make it possible to screen for a range of other diseases, such as chlamydia, from one sample.

Currently, 8 per cent of slides are inadequate and have to be redone, causing needless anxiety to women who are subsequently cleared. The slides are also difficult to scan for abnormalities.

This has led to a number of well-publicised failures. Baroness Hayman, the Health Minister, admitted yesterday as she presented the NHS Cervical Screening Programme's tenth annual report: "We recognise the need to increase accountability and openness in order to build public confidence in what is arguably one of the very best programmes of its type in the world," she said.

In the ten years since the programme was introduced, early

detection of cervical cancer has almost halved the death rate from seven per 100,000 to 3.7. On average more than 85 per cent of women in the 25-64 age group are now scanned at least once every five years and the service examines 4.5 million slides a year.

Further improvements are likely only if the quality of the slides can be improved. The present method involves wiping a spatula used to collect a smear across the slide and then fixing it with a preservative. The clinician's ability to do this varies from day to day and from slide to slide. Around 90 per cent of the material collected is thrown away on the spatula, so cells containing abnormalities may not be transferred. Others can be obscured by blood or other matter.

day after they had been trained to analyse the new slides. Training would take about six months, she said.

"It represents a major leap in quality," she said. "It is ideal for automated scanning devices and could open the way to screen for other illnesses like chlamydia."

She said the method could be used in conjunction with the new scanning technique announced last week by the Cancer Research Campaign, which relies on staining abnormal cells to make them more easily identifiable.

The method has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration in the United States, and trials underway in Edinburgh are scheduled to report in 2000. The Government has promised to consider funds for pilot projects to find out if it is cost effective.

Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted disease, with up to 2.5 million people believed to be infected and the number growing at 11 per cent a year. The infection can be dormant for years. In women, if left untreated, it can cause infertility and pregnancies outside the womb.



Ancient crocs roamed a balmy Arctic

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

NINETY million years ago crocodile-like creatures wandered an Arctic that was as warm as Florida is today, an American team has discovered.

Remains of an 8ft-long chamosaur, which had a long snout and razor-sharp teeth, show that, for a period of about six million years, the

Arctic was balmy. The bones were found by an expedition led by Professor John Tarduno, of the University of Rochester, to Axel Heiberg Island in the Canadian Arctic. To breed, the reptiles needed an extended warm period each summer with temperatures rising to the 80s and 90s.

Professor Tarduno believes that those temperatures were provided by vast amounts of carbon dioxide re-

leased by volcanoes. The fossils were found in sedimentary rocks on top of a deep layer of volcanic basalts, he and colleagues reported in *Science*.

Earlier finds of fossil trees 1,000 miles from any tree living today had shown the Arctic was once much warmer than today, but there had been no evidence that it was warm enough to support such reptiles.

Chamosaurs, or "crocodile liz-

ards", lived in freshwater streams in Europe and North America throughout the Cretaceous Period (from 144 to 65 million years ago) and were one of the few reptiles to survive the mass extinction of dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous.

They preyed on fish or small dinosaurs and were good swimmers, with a low centre of gravity that made them especially agile in the water.



Baroness Hayman aware of testing failures

To overcome these problems the new method involves rinsing the scraper in a small bottle containing a preservative fluid in which the cells from the smear are suspended. The bottle is sent to a laboratory, where a drop of the fluid is fixed on the centre of the slide. The cells are clearly spread out so that they are not obscured and the scanner can identify abnormalities more easily.

Phemie McGoogan, from Edinburgh University, said that clinicians should be able to read a third more tests each

Chocoholics eat their way to longer life

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

EATING sweets in moderation can give you an extra year of life, two self-confessed chocoholic doctors claim.

According to five years of careful research into the eating habits of 7,841 elderly male graduates of Harvard University, indulging in sweets or chocolates up to three times a month has real beneficial effects.

Even those who ate chocolate several times a week had a longer life expectancy than those who shunned it completely. "Unfortunately, greater consumption of candy was not associated with progressively lower mortality," J-Min Lee and Ralph Paffenberger write in today's issue of the *British Medical Journal*.

The two researchers, from the Harvard School of Public Health, confess to being one-chocolate-a-day men, which might mean that there is a conflict of interest in their study.

However, they say that while mortality was lowest among those consuming sweets one to three times a month and highest among those indulging their habit three or more times a week, non-consumers still had the highest mortality of all. Even

when factors such as cigarette smoking were taken into account, those who abstained from eating sweets were doomed to die earlier.

Over the five years of the study, 7.5 per cent of non-sweeteaters died, compared with 5.9 per cent of those who ate sweets in moderation.

"As with most things in life," they say, "moderation seems to be paramount." With the right amount of chocolate, a man could expect to live a year longer than an abstainer.

The scientists say that the same anti-oxidant phenols are present in chocolates as exist in red wine, which is already known to absorb the unstable molecules responsible for heart disease. And they also believe that cacao, which is the raw material for chocolate, could inhibit the oxidation of the worst forms of cholesterol, while at the same time boosting the immune system.

The subjects were taken from the Harvard alumni health study, an ongoing study of men entering Harvard University between 1916 and 1950. The effects on women of eating chocolate would probably be similar, according to the researchers.

US teams isolate asthma trigger

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A KEY culprit in triggering asthma attacks has been identified by two American teams. They have found that a messenger molecule whose role is to co-ordinate the body's immune response plays a narrowing of the airways in asthma.

Blocking the action of this messenger, interleukin-13, prevents asthmatic mice from having an attack when exposed to an allergen that would normally provoke one. This suggests that drugs that block interleukin-13 could be effective in preventing attacks.

Asthma sufferers have

airways in their lungs that are chronically inflamed. This leaves them sensitive to allergens, viruses, dust or tobacco smoke, or even cold air, which cause the airways to constrict and make breathing difficult.

Two teams, from Johns Hopkins University and the University of California in Los Angeles, publish similar findings in *Science*. "Current therapies treat only the symptoms of asthma," Gabrielle Grünig, of UCLA, said. "We are excited about the possibilities of moving towards treatments that control the disease from its point of origin."

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Court quashes IRA bombing conviction

A SCIENCE graduate jailed for 25 years for making IRA bombs, including the Hyde Park device that killed four soldiers and seven horses, won his appeal yesterday against conviction.

But Danny McNamee, who was jailed in 1987, was told by the Court of Appeal that, although it now found his conviction for conspiracy to cause explosions unsafe, it did not mean he was innocent.

Reading from a 36-page judgment, Lord Justice Swinton Thomas, sitting with Mr Justice Garland and Mr Justice Longmore, said that there was strong fingerprint evidence against Mr McNamee. He said: "We consider that, on the totality of the evidence of which we have knowledge, the Crown make out a strong case that the appellant was guilty."

The conviction was ruled unsafe because the court could not be sure that the jury would have convicted him if they had heard fresh evidence put during the appeal. The case now put to the court was also very different to the case before the Old Bailey.

Mr McNamee was freed last month under the Good

Judges say Hyde Park blast ruling does not mean freed man is innocent, writes Stewart Tendler

Friday agreement and was in court to hear the judgment. He said later that he was pleased to be cleared, but accused the court of "trying to have their cake and eat it".

He said: "It was a grudging judgment. They are trying to cover up the malpractice of the prosecuting authorities and police during the original trial."

The case is the fifth major IRA conviction thrown out by the Court of Appeal in recent years, and the first terrorism case referred back to the court by the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Mr McNamee, who took a law degree in prison and is now working on an MA in law, said that he would seek compensation. Gareth Peirce,

his solicitor, accused the judges of leaving the suspicion of guilt hanging in the air.

The bomb attack in Hyde Park in July 1982 involved a remote-controlled device near Kensington Barracks. Mr McNamee was arrested in Crossmaglen, Co Armagh, in 1986 and charged with conspiracy. The indictment was altered ten days before his trial to include the Hyde Park bombing and he was convicted on evidence linking him to two IRA arms dumps and a bomb in Kensington.

During the appeal, Michael Mansfield, QC, for Mr McNamee, argued that there had been a massive failure to disclose relevant material. The defence, he said, had been unaware of Scotland Yard reports showing links between material found in the dumps and other bomb-makers, including Desmond Ellis, who was jailed in Dublin for bomb-making and another man who was a more likely candidate than Mr McNamee for making the Hyde Park bomb.

It was also argued that scientific evidence linking Mr McNamee to work on circuit boards for the Hyde Park



Danny McNamee yesterday and, below, the aftermath of the Hyde Park bombing. He attacked the Court of Appeal's "grudging judgment"

bomb was no longer reliable. There was also now doubt over a thumbprint found on a bomb defused in Kensington in 1983.

The court said that there was no argument about some fingerprints found in the two caches hidden by the IRA. During his trial Mr McNamee said that the prints on pieces of tape must have been left while he was working at an electronics factory outside Dundalk in

the Irish Republic. It was accepted that the factory made bombs, but he denied any involvement.

The appeal judges said: "That explanation was, not surprisingly, rejected by the jury and seems to us implausible."

But new evidence showed that it was no longer possible to say that Mr McNamee was responsible for circuit work or for making the Hyde Park bomb. The court accepted

there had been a "material irregularity" over the non-disclosure, but the judges made no finding on whether it was deliberate.

During the appeal, 14 fingerprint officers from different forces gave evidence on the thumbprint. They were divided on whether it could be linked to Mr McNamee, which was enough to render unsafe the conviction based on the Kensington bomb.



offence protect your sex ab...

Lost ship inquiry will be reopened

BY A CORRESPONDENT

A FULL inquiry is to be reopened in the High Court into the sinking of the biggest British vessel lost at sea, the 169,000-tonne bulk carrier *Derbyshire*, which went down in a typhoon off Japan in 1980 with the loss of all 42 crew and two of their wives.

Findings of a government-backed expedition to the wreck prompted a decision last March to hold a new inquiry. Yesterday John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, said that the formal investigation would be reopened in full.

The first inquiry, in 1987, blamed bad weather for the ship's loss in the South China Sea. Relatives, unions and shipping experts have said the *Derbyshire* and other bulk carriers had design faults.

A union-backed expedition to the wreck led to two government expeditions which concluded that structural faults did not cause the ship to foundered, but a survey scientist said that the ship had been "ill-prepared to take on the rigours of typhoon seas".

Mr Prescott said: "The loss of the *Derbyshire* has been a matter of controversy since she sank. I trust that the reopened formal investigation will be able to address all the outstanding questions and close the chapter on the loss of the vessel, with the tragic deaths of all those on board."

"We will continue to press for improvements to the standards of the world's fleet of bulk carriers to reduce the number of losses of such vessels."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Papers face contempt charges

The Attorney-General was given leave by the High Court yesterday to bring contempt proceedings against *The Sun* and *The Observer* for potentially prejudicial articles. Last June, during the trial of James McArdle arising out of the Docklands bombing, *The Sun* ran a story headed "Sun helped me nail Docklands bomber". The *Observer* case relates to the trial of the artist Anthony Noel Kelly for the theft of anatomical specimens.

Eklund jury hung

Carl Hutson, 20, the man accused of robbing Britt Eklund of her Rolex watch, faces a retrial after a jury at Southwark Crown Court failed to reach a verdict at the end of 5 1/2 hours of deliberation.

Bulls run amok

Five young bulls caused mayhem after they trampled down a fence and stampeded on to a dual carriageway at Downham, Wiltshire. Three were killed and two injured after being hit by vehicles.

Old tyres alert

A coroner is to warn the Army of the dangers of old tyres after Private James Dunn, 29, died when a 12-year-old tyre on the truck he was driving exploded near Oxford in May. Verdict: accidental death.

Screen romance

The BBC reporter Yvette Fielding, 30, was on air presenting the Southampton docu-soap *City Hospital* when the cameraman, her boyfriend Carl Beattie, also 30, asked her to marry him. She said yes.

Voles in a hole

A colony of rare water voles at a wildlife area near Bridgwater, Somerset, have narrowly escaped being destroyed after visitors thought they were rats and suggested that they should be poisoned.

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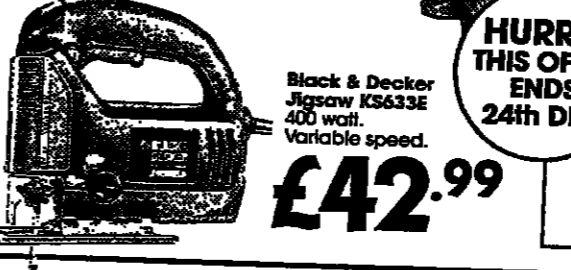
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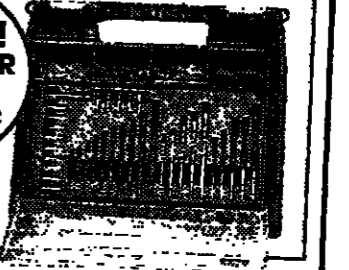
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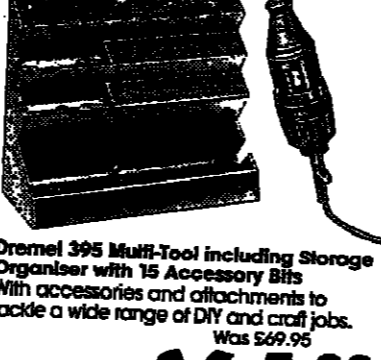


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December is the shortest month

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

PEOPLE born at Christmas are likely to be shorter than those born at any other time. They tend to weigh less at birth and most never manage to catch up with children born in other months.

A study of the birth records of 1,166,206 children born in Denmark between 1973 and 1994, published in *The Lancet* today, shows that the average December baby is three-quarters of an inch shorter than one born in April, the month when mothers can expect to give birth to the tallest babies. By the time the child reaches maturity at 18, according to

another study in Austria, the average gap between the December child and the April child will have widened to about 2 1/4 inches.

The researchers from the Danish Epidemiology Science Centre in Copenhagen also found that the height of babies tended to dip in the midsummer months of June and July, although by only half as much as in midwinter. They have no real explanation for the seasonal difference, babies in December, January and February were born an average of a day earlier than those born in other months.

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Mme Mitterrand: sale for human rights

Mitterrand gifts sold

Paris Danielle Mitterrand, the former French First Lady, is selling hundreds of gifts from Nancy Reagan, Yasser Arafat and the Dalai Lama, among others, and will donate the proceeds to a human rights group she heads.

The 235 items were to be offered at a two-day sale starting last night at the Plaza Athénée Hotel.

Included were a Cartier basket (estimated to fetch £250) and a frame (£150) from Mrs Reagan, a box with the Zairean flag and a portrait of the late dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko (€300), and two kimonos from Empress Michiko of Japan (€700). (AFP)

Euro-MPs block Santer on budget

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

THE European Parliament, yesterday struck a rare blow against alleged incompetence and fraud in the European Commission and set the scene for a vote that could force the resignation of Jacques Santer, the Commission President, and his executive.

Against widespread expectations, the Strasbourg assembly used a vote on the Commission's 1996 budget report to signal anger over reports that blame the Brussels body for mismanaging hundreds of millions of pounds of EU funds and which depict it as a haven for corruption and nepotism.

By refusing to clear the Commission's accounts by 270-225 votes, the parliament set the stage for a censure motion next month which, if passed, would require Mr Santer and his 19 commissioners to stand down months ahead of the end of their term next December.

Like several past censure attempts, this is unlikely to succeed, given the requirement

for a two-thirds majority vote. However the budget rejection amounted to a humiliation for the Commission as it tries to reform itself and quash its image as a haven of waste and incompetence. It also dimmed further any chance that Mr Santer could be reappointed.

Yesterday's move was opposed by the dominant Social-



Santer: little chance of being reappointed

ist bloc in the assembly, led by Pauline Green of the British Labour party, which accused the conservative side of grandstanding ahead of next June's elections to the European parliament.

Mrs Green called for a rapid censure vote to clear the air and re-establish confidence in the Commission. "Either they have our confidence or they do not and they leave," she said.

Leaders of the smaller centre-right bloc, including Britain's Conservatives, were behind the budget move. Edward McMillan-Scott, leader of the Euro Tories, said the vote amounted to a no-confidence motion in the Commission over its failure to clean up fraud, administrative practices costing taxpayers huge sums and its culture of secrecy. Erkki Liikanen, the budget Commissioner, acknowledged what he said was a defeat for the Brussels body, but said there was no question of re-

signing. The EU's financial watchdogs last month complained that €3 billion had been mismanaged in last year's EU spending, which is administered by the Commission. Police are investigating alleged large-scale fraud in staffing contracts.

Senior officials have also turned whistleblowers and reported extensive abuses to the parliament. In the latest disclosures, auditors have identified questionable practices in the administration of the so-called Leonardo da Vinci programme, worth €420 million over the past four years. The Commission further angered the MEPs with a warning on the eve of yesterday's vote to avoid doing anything that could unsettle the work of the Brussels executive. "The Commission will be seriously undermined if the Parliament does not vote the budget discharge," Mr Santer said. His words were not heeded by the parliament.



Wolfgang Thierse, president of the German Bundestag, unveils a 22ft aluminium sculpture of the federal eagle for Berlin's Reichstag building, which will be home for the German parliament after it moves from Bonn in the middle of next year

British base for rescue

FROM TOM WALKER AT THE BRITISH CONSULATE IN MOSCOW

Price of power leads to culture shock

Students die in rubble

Turkish leader accused

Jakarta rioter shot

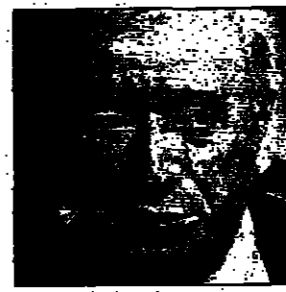
Dhaka ferry tragedy

Death for Pakistanis

WORLD IN BRIEF

Montand paternity claim thrown out

Paris: An appeals court ruled that Yves Montand, right, did not father a young woman who claims to be his daughter, relying on a DNA test on the corpse of the legendary French singer and actor.



Montand, who died of a heart attack in 1991 aged 70 — three days before he was due to testify in the paternity suit — had always denied that Anne Drossart, 24, was his daughter and refused to undergo tests. After years of trying, Mme Drossart and her mother, Anne Fleurance, won a court-ordered exhumation of Montand's corpse from Paris's Père Lachaise cemetery, horrifying the singer's heirs. It was carried out in March and proved negative.

Four years ago a Paris court had concluded that Montand was the father, because of a physical resemblance and his refusal, twice, to undergo blood tests. Now the two women say that they will appeal to the highest court, the Cour de Cassation. (AP)

Students die in rubble

Iguazua, Spain: Firefighters recovered the bodies of two students and rescued ten more from the rubble of a building that collapsed in this northeastern town. The victims were teenage students at a cookery school housed in the building which crumbled soon after 9am. It was reported on national radio.

In Rome, rescue workers digging through the rubble of a collapsed five-storey building found five bodies, bringing the toll from the collapse on Wednesday to 26. So far the bodies have been recovered of 11 men, ten women and five children from the chunks of concrete that remain of the building. (AP)

Turkish leader accused

Ankara: A Turkish parliamentary commission recommended that Mesut Yilmaz, the caretaker Prime Minister, should be sent to the supreme court to face corruption charges in a move that could prevent him from serving in any new government. An absolute majority of MPs in the 550-seat parliament must approve the decision before Mr Yilmaz, a conservative, has to face the court. His Government was toppled in a parliamentary censure vote last month on separate corruption allegations. The left-wing leader Bulent Ecevit is struggling to gain support for a new minority coalition to take the country into April elections. (Reuters)

Jakarta rioter shot



Jakarta: An Indonesian student confronts a phalanx of riot police, above, after they fired shots and teargas on thousands of student demonstrators demanding democratic reforms. One student was shot dead and ten had gunshot wounds as the protesters tried to storm parliament buildings. Others were beaten or overpowered by gas as they threw stones, bottles and petrol bombs at police and troops. It was the second straight day that students have clashed with security forces in the capital, and it was the worst violence since November 13, when 14 people died after troops fired on students. (AP)

Dhaka ferry tragedy

Dhaka: At least 15 people drowned and scores were missing after a ferry carrying about 250 passengers capsized near here. Police said the boat sank as it was about to touch a pier on the Buriganga river at Gudaraghat, a few miles from the Bangladesh capital. The vessel fixed and sank as passengers rushed to disembark. In another ferry tragedy, it was reported from the Chinese city of Shanghai that ten people died after a boat carrying 33 people capsized on a river in the southern province of Guizhou. The motorised wooden boat tipped over because of errors by the crew piloting the ferry, according to newspaper reports. (Reuters)

Death for Pakistanis

Karachi: Military courts, which have replaced civilian ones in Pakistan's southern Sindh province, handed down their first judgments, sentencing two men to death, one for rape and the other for murder. Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, turned the courts over to the military last month in the province, where more than 1,000 people have been killed in ethnic feuding this year. The combatants have been rival factions of the MQM, an organisation of Indian Muslims who settled in Pakistan in 1947. Many victims have been innocent civilians caught in the cross-fire. Civil rights have also been suspended in the province. (AP)

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British set up base for Kosovo rescue troops

FROM TOM WALKER AT PETROVAC AIRFIELD, MACEDONIA

BRITISH troops in Macedonia yesterday began preparing an armoured infantry base outside the capital, Skopje, from which Nato may have to fight its way into Yugoslavia to rescue any international monitors caught in the worsening Kosovo conflict.

A British advance party, mostly comprising Royal Engineers and soldiers from the Port and Maritime Transport Regiment, is bringing in the ground-based military muscle of the Nato's Extraction Force. It may need to be used if air sorties into Kosovo prove inadequate or impossible because of the region's fierce winter and mountainous terrain.

On the military side of Skopje's Petrovac Airport, British troops were yesterday working out how to house 21 Warrior armoured fighting vehicles, the backbone of the first

battalion of the King's Own Royal Border Regiment, who will form the main British component of the French-led force.

Many of the 150 British troops there by last night had endured an arduous nine-day trip aboard the Royal Fleet Auxiliary *Sea Centurion*, which had experienced engine trouble on her journey from Southampton to Salonika. As

Rebels die in Serb swoop

Pristina: Serbian policemen swooped on the Albanian stronghold of Pec, where six Kosovo Serbs were killed this week, arresting eleven people and killing two ethnic Albanian rebels in a firefight. (AP)

they sailed into the Greek port on Wednesday night, news of airstrikes against Iraq was breaking.

"My initial reaction was 'bloody hell, why am I here, I should be there,'" said Lance Corporal "Bebs" Bebbington, an engineer, facing the freezing gale dropping from surrounding snow-capped peaks and across Petrovac's airstrip. "It was on CNN in Greek, but there was enough English in the background to know what was going on."

Corporal Bebbington and Lance-Corporal Andy Parkinson manoeuvred their 17.5-tonne combat engineer tractor around the tarmac, pointing out the vehicle's ability to climb, float, haul, dig and fire rockets. "It's the complete works," said Corporal Bebbington who, like most of the British contingent, will be



A Warrior armoured fighting vehicle goes ashore in Salonika yesterday — one of more than 100 military vehicles for the new airfield base

spending his six months in Macedonia based in a dilapidated Skopje hotel, which the engineers are renovating.

President Milosevic of Yugoslavia has said in a recent newspaper interview — his first encounter with any for-

sign journalist in two years — that the Yugoslav Army will resist any attempt by foreign troops to enter Kosovo. A spokesman for Nato's Naples-based southern forces has admitted that the 1,800-strong

Extraction Force has little hope of breaking past a hostile Yugoslav Army, but Wesley Clarke, Nato's Supreme Commander, has attempted to stifle a debate that is still theoretical. Diplomats, however, consider the extractors as yet another

bargaining chip that Mr Milosevic — and the Kosovo Liberation Army — need to size up. One said yesterday that the nightmare scenario for the force was for its troops to enter Kosovo, and become stuck there. "Who will extract the ex-

tractors?" he asked, pointing to the problems suffered by US Marines during their disastrous foray into the Somali capital, Mogadishu, in 1994.

The British will have 367 soldiers in the force, to be demitted by 650 French troops.

Price of power leads to culture shock

FROM ANNA BLUNDY IN MOSCOW

AFTER repeated warnings, the plug is finally being pulled on electricity for Moscow's most revered cultural institutions.

The Ministry of Culture is the only one without a barter arrangement with Mosenorgo, the electricity supplier — which means that concert halls and music schools which have not yet been cut off will be left in the dark from December 22.

Although libraries, museums and concert halls will not be open to the general public, they will be open to criminals, according to the *Sogodnya* newspaper, because the burglar alarms will also be cut off with the lights.

Debtors have received warning notes advising them to secure their properties against thieves.

"It's a complete mockery," said Galina Krasnopyorova, deputy director of the children's music school attached to the Moscow Conservatoire. "How can we work like this?"

She says that the institute does not have the money to pay and she has appealed to Yuri Luzhkov, the Mayor of Moscow, for help.

However, Mosenorgo officials say the arts "can afford to pay, but feel immune because of their international reputation and want to spend their money elsewhere. 'What can they offer as barter?' a senior Mosenorgo official asked. 'Free concerts'."

The power cuts have come as a shock to people used to small and largely symbolic electricity bills under communism.

The largest debtor is the presidential administration, with 19 million roubles (£700,000) unpaid against the conservatoire's relatively small debt of 80,000 roubles. But the administration, unlike the cultural institutions, is protected from unexpected blackouts by a presidential decree.

Ukraine hit by spread of Aids virus

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN ODESSA

JUST 11 years since the first case of HIV, the Aids-related virus, was detected in Ukraine, the former Soviet republic has achieved the dubious distinction of being the country with the fastest spread of the virus in Europe.

Some 23,000 people have officially tested positive, although experts say the real figure is at least twice as high. So far, 650 people have developed full-blown Aids, including 50 children, and 280 have died.

The United Nations agency Unids forecasts that 1.8 million people in Ukraine could die of Aids by 2016. At the centre of this explosion is the Black Sea port city of Odessa, whose elegant streets and restaurants mask a tradition of drug-taking and prostitution that goes back to Soviet times.

Of the city's 1.5 million population, 10,000 are known to be HIV-positive. The real figure is likely to be far higher, as testing is only compulsory for medical workers, prison inmates and foreign citizens spending more than three months in Ukraine.

As one doctor put it: "We see little point in screening more people, when we have no treatment for them anyhow." The Odessa police say there are about 2,000 regular prostitutes, although this number rises to 6,000 in summer.

There are the women who work in hotels, who charge up to £100 a time. They are thought to have had a negligible effect on the growth of HIV, being well educated in the risks. But there are the prostitutes who stand on the main highways outside the city, offering sex with motorists for 60p. Most are drug addicts, for whom sex is the quickest way of raising the cash. Needle contamination accounts for more than 90 per cent of HIV cases in Ukraine.

A non-government organisation, Faith, Hope and Love (FHL), to provide medical and legal advice to prostitutes, as well as condoms and syringes, has been set up. "The most difficult part was gaining their trust," said Tatyana Semikop, a police major who also works with the FHL. "They are a very closed group."

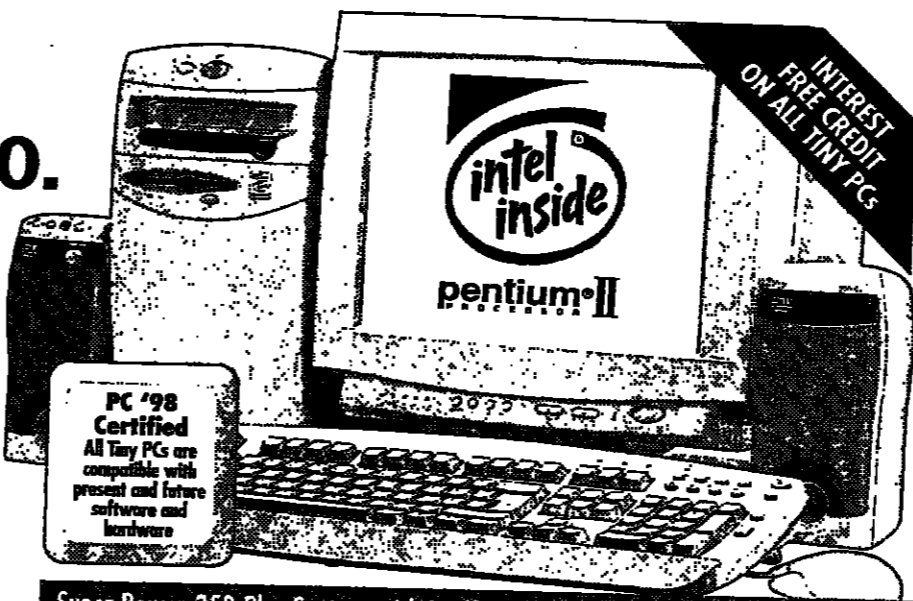
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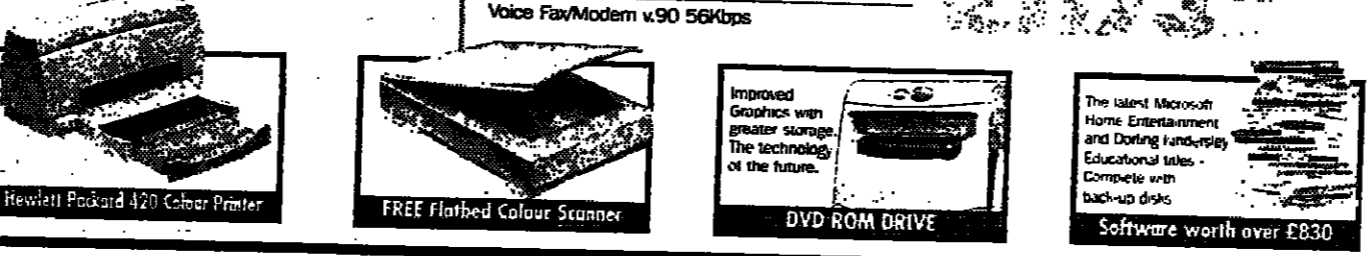
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A 7ft-tall bronze statue of President Clinton playing golf is hoisted from a foundry in Dublin yesterday bound for Ballybunion in Co Kerry to commemorate his visit there when he rounded off an official trip to Ireland in September

Republicans fall out over raid timing

PRESIDENT Clinton last night tore into critics who accused him of concocting a *Wag the Dog* plot to divert attention from his political plight, saying "no reasonably astute person" would think such a thing.

As Republican leaders discussed how long they should postpone yesterday's planned impeachment debate, they were split between those who publicly backed military action and others who denounced the timing as deeply suspicious.

Last night Republican leaders were planning to start the impeachment debate today, and were prepared to sit all through tonight to complete votes on the four articles of impeachment.

The criticism, led by Trent Lott, the Senate majority leader, was astonishing for being almost unprecedented: when a President is engaged in a military campaign there is an unwritten rule that "politics stops at the water's edge". But the film *Wag the Dog*, released this year and featuring a President who invents a war to distract attention from an affair, was on everybody's lips as soon as the Gulf engagements were announced.

Leaders ready to go ahead with impeachment, writes Damian Whitworth

such an action. This was the right thing for the country," he added that it had been a difficult decision and gave a warning that President Saddam Hussein should not consider invading Kuwait. "I think that surely he knows what a disastrous mistake that would be," Mr Lott had said that he could not support the action in the Gulf because "both the timing and the policy are subject to question". Other Republicans were even more outspoken and the chorus of disap-



Lott: criticism in a war crisis unprecedented

approval included Scott Ritter, the former chief United Nations weapons inspector. "You have no choice but to interpret this as *Wag the Dog*. You have no choice," he said. "What Richard Butler did last week with the inspections was a set-up. This was designed to generate a conflict that would justify a bombing," he said, referring to the chief arms UN inspector whose report on Saddam's lack of co-operation with inspections triggered the strikes.

The *Washington Times* reported yesterday that officials within the Pentagon were sceptical of the timing of the strikes. But Mr Cohen said he was "prepared to place 30 years of public service on the line" in defending the decision to strike. General Shelton, head of the military Joint Chiefs of Staff, added: "Militarily it was the right decision, the right date and that decision was taken back in November."

A CNN poll showed 74 per cent of Americans approved of the strikes. The similarities between Washington life and Hollywood art have attracted attention since the premiere of *Wag the Dog* a year ago and the Lewinsky scandal erupted a month later. The day after Mr Clinton wagged his finger and said "I did not have sexual relations with that woman", he sent Cabinet officials to Europe to build support for strikes against Saddam.

Ironically, Robert De Niro, one of the stars and producers of *Wag the Dog*, was lobbying members of Congress against impeachment this week.



Barbra Streisand at the anti-impeachment rally

Stars come out to shine for Clinton

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN WASHINGTON

TWO hours before the first missiles hit Baghdad, a platoon of top film stars gathered in California to defend the President against impeachment.

Barbra Streisand led the charge, arriving with her new husband and two bodyguards to declare herself "stunned" at Republicans' willingness to "turn their backs on the public and ignore the voice of the American people".

She spoke outside an office building a continent away from Washington and a world away from the Gulf. Among the banners waved by a 1,000-strong anti-impeachment crowd was one that Mr Clinton might have dreamed of. It read: "He Lied About Sex - So What?"

Ms Streisand, a loyal "Friend of Bill" who has sung for him at the White House and stayed in the Lincoln Bedroom, accused congressional leaders of ignoring a "sacred constitutional duty... to heed the will of the people and respect their judgment".

As Operation Desert Fox neared, she hailed Mr Clinton as one "who has done a great job here at home and is acclaimed as a peacemaker around the world".

She was joined by the director Rob Reiner, the TV producer Norman Lear and the actors Ted Danson and Mary Steenburgen - also close friends and sometime holiday companions of the First Family.

Susan McDougal, the Clintons' former Whitewa-

ter partner, was there. She was recently acquitted in an embezzlement case she claimed was brought as a vendetta by associates of Kenneth Starr, the special prosecutor who has pursued the President.

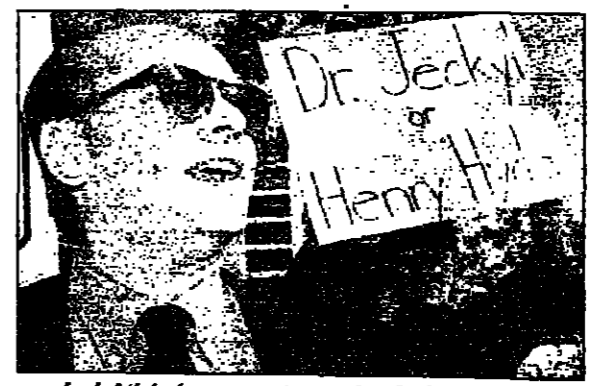
But it fell to Jack Nicholson to address what has baffled so many outside America about its year-long obsession with the Lewinsky affair. "We're kind of a strange country," he said. "We're Puritan-formed about sexuality."

He was also the only one to touch on the wider issues engulfing the impeachment debate even as he spoke. Noting that people in Iraq were about to be "bombed out of existence", he declared: "This is not about my friend, the President. It is about the presidency."

Stalwarts of the liberal establishment have spoken out passionately for Mr Clinton this week, and some Republican congressmen found themselves being telephoned by the actor Robert De Niro.

But the President's support in Hollywood is no longer rock-solid. Tom Hanks was reported as saying that he regrets making a \$10,000 (£6,250) donation to the President's legal defence fund, and Robert Duvall makes a veiled attack in next month's *George* magazine.

"I'm not a big Barbra Streisand fan," he says. "She said if George Bush were re-elected she would move to England. Well, let her move! Fast!"



Jack Nicholson: country puritanical about sex

Life closely copies Hollywood art

BY GILES WHITTELL

"TO CHANGE the story," Robert De Niro says in *Wag the Dog*, "change the lead".

In the film whose title has become a motto for the Clinton Administration, the story at the outset is a teenage girl who, days before an election, claims that she was molested in the Oval Office. It is De Niro's job to change the "lead". He does so by creating a convenient Balkan war manufactured for the news networks in the mansion of a Hollywood producer.

It appears that the military strike against Iraq is real. Otherwise the parallels between life and this particular piece of art are close, and all too familiar. In both cases the crises are monitored from a secure "simulation room" beneath the White House. The President acts to prevent the rogue use of weapons of mass destruction (in the film, these are suitcase-sized

atom bombs in the hands of Albanian terrorists), and he does so with help from the world of entertainment: one of Mr Clinton's unofficial advisers is Harry Thomason, the television producer.

Released two weeks before the Monica Lewinsky scandal broke, the film's timing was so prescient that its stars were too embarrassed to discuss its plot with Mr Clinton when they met him soon afterwards. He has already appeared to use the film as a blueprint for distracting the world's attention from his personal woes - but it contains one idea still untried by the real White House.

In the film De Niro's character orders up a downed US spy plane pilot to keep the "war" in the headlines. He suggests the B3 bomber as the plane in question. When told there is no such thing, he replies: "Perfect! Deny it even exists."

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Protests mark trial of China dissidents

THERE were unusual demonstrations outside a Chinese court yesterday as 200 people gathered to show their support for a Chinese dissident, one of China's most wanted men after the Tiananmen massacre of June 1989, who went on trial.

A woman held up a poster saying "Protest" and the demonstrators resisted police efforts to seize it.

Wang Youcai, 32, a former student leader of the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations, was accused at Hangzhou of trying to form an opposition group, the Chinese Democratic Party. At the same time, another member of the new party, Qin Youngmin, 45, a veteran activist, was being tried in Wuhan, central China, where two protesters were reportedly dragged away from the court.

Both the accused, whose lawyers earlier faced police harassment and were unable to represent them, face charges of trying to subvert state power over their attempts to set up the opposition party last June. They

Officials stick to hard line on rebels, writes James Pringle in Beijing



Wang, charged with bid to subvert state power

face possible life sentences. They were arrested separately last month in a nationwide crackdown on activists involved with the new party. Authorities have refused their applications to register the party which they say is required by

law. China has declared that all opposition parties are illegal and has taken a hard line, despite hopes of a political thaw early this year that led to talk of a "Beijing Spring".

Together with Xu Wenli, who served 12 years for campaigning for democracy in the late Seventies and who is again under arrest in Beijing in connection with the new party, the two men are among the most prominent of China's human rights activists still operating in the country.

Wang's wife and two family friends were allowed into the Hangzhou court. Police, who seemed in a relatively conciliatory mood, did not permit foreign reporters to interview protesters or relatives.

The prosecution of Wang and Qin is part of the Communist Party's most aggressive crackdown in two years on those challenging its monopoly

ly on power. The trials appear to have concluded and the verdicts will be announced in the state-run media, officials said.

The court appearances came the day before an important Communist Party meeting in Beijing to celebrate the achievements of 20 years of economic reform.

China recently signed the United Nations international covenant for civil and political rights, which is supposed to guarantee freedom of expression and association, but Chinese officials say the two cases have nothing to do with human rights and concern only "criminal acts".

Wang and Qin are the best known dissidents China has put on trial since Wang Dan, the student leader who was convicted for subversion in 1996. He was sentenced to 11 years but released after less than two on medical parole. He later went into exile in America.

Amnesty International said Wang and Qin were prisoners of conscience.



Hu Jiangxia, Wang's wife, and protesters were barred from speaking to reporters

Indian girls in ordeal by fire

Delhi: Two Indian girls doused themselves with paraffin and set themselves on fire to test whether a television hero modelled on Superman would save them, a newspaper reported yesterday.

One of the girls, a ten-year-old named Varsha Kulkarni, who was wearing a polyester dress, was in a critical condition after the experiment, the *Indian Express* said.

Varsha and her classmate, Asma Lattiappannavar, had been watching an episode of *Shaktimaan* (Mr Powerful), who rescues people in distress.

The *Express* said Asma, who suffered minor burns, became terrified after Varsha's "whole body started burning" and shouted for help. Villagers from the southern town of Hubli rushed to the spot and doused the flames, but the girl suffered third-degree burns. (AFP)



Deng, centre, swimming in 1987. Reform turned the tide

Deng's open door leads to mixed fortunes

CHINA today celebrates the 20th anniversary of free-market economic reforms that have transformed the world's largest country, bringing about a startling social revolution.

Yet as Chinese leaders take stock of the open-door policies of the late senior leader, Deng Xiaoping, unveiled under the slogan "to get rich is glorious" on December 18, 1978, there is growing anxiety about millions of workers being laid off in money-losing state-owned enterprises and simmering anger at official corruption.

President Jiang Zemin, Deng's successor, will address a closed-door commemoration in Beijing's Great Hall of the People today, but otherwise celebrations will be low-key. Yet few outside the rust-belt of northeast China and poor inland provinces would turn the clock back 20 years to an era when most wore drab Mao suits and had little knowledge of the outside world.

And, just in case there is any misplaced nostalgia for what some recall as a time of greater equality, the revolutionary museum is staging an exhibition of life then, displaying ration cards among memorabilia of an austere period.

Newspapers have been publishing pictures of Beijing's streets two decades ago, with grey-walled, low-lying, charming but inconvenient homes, and as the streets are now, lined with glitzy but charmless skyscrapers and traversed by concrete overpasses. And it is true that since 1978 per capita gross domestic product has increased fivefold and rural incomes quadrupled, even though 120 million rootless peasants roam the streets.

Concern over such reform side-effects as the massive layoffs, bankrupt state banks and a fall in inward investment has taken some of the glow off the celebrations. Yet girls in a state-run Friendship Store were yesterday leafing through fashion magazines to learn how to match clothes and apply make-up correctly. Twenty years ago there was no make-up — and only foreigners were allowed in Friendship Stores.

It is also true that lifestyles have been transformed in a manner unthinkable two decades ago. China is undergoing a sexual revolution, with divorce up and extra-marital affairs the subject of office gossip. Most cities now have sex

Little nostalgia as Chinese look back over two decades, writes James Pringle

shops and gay bars. The Half Moon Nightclub in Beijing's diplomatic quarter is run by a transsexual, a former colonel now favouring velvet gowns.

Some things do not change. In the late 1970s, I could go every day to Xidan Street and join crowds reading posters on Democracy Wall. Some were put up by Xu Wenli, an electrician who later served 12 years in jail, most in solitary confinement, for calling for democracy. Now Mr Xu has been arrested again in a crackdown on dissidents.

Yet in economic terms, China is transformed. In 1979, people still hankered after the "three rounds and a sound" — watch, bicycle, sewing machine and radio. Now there are 100.5 television sets per 100 households. I met a woman who had watched *Tropic* four times. Nothing, she said, a friend had seen it 28 times.

There is a buoyant mood among city dwellers flush with cash, who can holiday in Thailand and buy new clothes, but still a seething fury among ordinary Chinese over official corruption and cronyism. "It is a number one issue," said one woman yesterday. "It is even higher in people's minds than job lay-offs."

As China faces flagging exports and falling domestic consumer demand, its leaders know they must strike a balance between continuing reform and stability or risk social unrest. The Prime Minister, Zhu Rongji, told officials this month that China faced "complicated and heavy tasks of reform, development and stability" next year. In October, China celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Communist takeover. The surprising fact to many is that, after the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, in which millions died, the Tiananmen massacre — its tenth anniversary in June worries leaders — and the Soviet Union's fate, there still is a ruling Communist Party.

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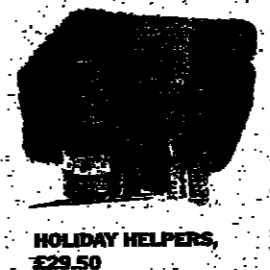
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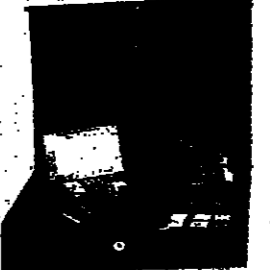
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Dressed like an angel



There are pressing reasons for not wearing a very grand frock — these include affectionate dogs, small children and projectile squirts of boiling fat that always accompany fowl basting

So, have you made it yet — the big decision? I don't mean the big shall we have goose or turkey decision. Or the even bigger one about whether we really have to go to the parents this year, what with the lumpy mattress, the miserly trickle of lukewarm bathwater and the grim cellar full of inky beaujolais? Nope, I mean have you decided what to wear on Christmas Day?

No doubt some of our readers, the organised ones, are already well on top of this situation, having snapped up a perfect little outfit, *prix choc*, in last January's sales, along with their Christmas cards. Anyone in this happy position can turn to the financial pages and check on their investments while the rest of us get on with panicking.

It is, you see, quite hard to get it right. Of course, if you are lucky enough to be spending Christmas at home alone, you can wear whatever you please — wrap the entire day, if you like, spend in a pashmina dressing gown, N. Peal cashmere vest, Prada net lace knickers and satin beaded slippers from Inner Sole, eating salmon eggs, and rose and violet creams and watching old movies on the telly.

But for most of us who find ourselves visiting or entertaining relatives, there is a distinct feeling of being on parade. Faced with the prospect of midnight Mass at your parents' church of St Jude the Less, where the congregation has an ineradicable memory of you, aged three, toddling down the aisle in a Gap all-in-one with little furry ears. It is not unusual to be overpowered by the urge to give the fashion vigilantes of the Mothers' Union something to remember.

This is a perfectly appropriate feeling for the time of year, and it is fun to give into it — just so long as you don't expect the sort of reaction you would get in London. By all means, sweep into your parents' pew, clanking festively in Versace's

gold chainmail dress. But do not be dismayed if no one comes rushing up, as they would in London, cooing "How divine. It's Versace, isn't it?" You just get on with jingling your chainmail in time to *Hark the Herald Angels*. They'll have noticed you, right enough.

Still, however great the private amusement factor, there are pressing reasons for not wearing a very grand frock at Christmas time. These include affectionate dogs, small children with disgusting sweets, the projectile squirts of boiling fat that always accompany fowl-basting, and uncles, both the ancient kind with amorous intentions and full glasses of Whisky Mac in their trembly old hands, and the hearty sort who like to get everyone out fell-walking as soon as Her Majesty has done her bit. If you were a real minx, you would use your posh frock as an excuse not to get mixed up with any of the above. But since you are a kind-hearted girl, you may care to consider some of the alternatives.

One idea is to wear something elegant but plainish — a pair of wide-legged velvet trousers, say, with a cashmere or velvet tunic, and fling a really stupendous coat on top for drinks with the neighbours. Jasper Conran does perfect black velvet pawns, £195 (reduced to £95 at Fenwick, Bond Street), and Laura Ashley has a pair in black or burgundy velvet reduced to £45 (from £60).

Helen David of English Eccentrics does velvet tunics in jewel colours. A dip-dyed tunic shading from cerise to amethyst is £398 (reduced to

£269 at Fenwick). Or there is her cashmere cardigan in raspberry or blackberry with sequined cuffs, £299 (£425). And she does the best ever Christmas coat in black velvet, intricately embroidered with rose-red curlicues for £649 (£929). Georgina von Etzdorf does a pretty mean coat, too, in black velvet, lined in purple and covered in beaded starbursts, £1,295, and I could spend a very happy Christmas in her bias-cut long russet velvet coat printed with winter berries, £450.

If it is your turn to play Father Christmas, do it elegantly in Karen Millen's berry-red velvet frock coat, £195, and matching trousers, £99.95. Her gold beaded crocheted cobweb dress, £95, is the very thing for a Christmas Eve party, as is Press & Bastyan's raspberry chiffon shift with glitter flowers, £180.

The children (and you, too, for that matter if you are joining the after-lunch walkers) will look adorable in Gap's snowflake fleece or its chunky sweaters with a knitted snowflake or Christmas tree motif. Laura Ashley is a reliable source of chunky sweaters, too, in heather wool mix, £40, or hand-knit heavy cotton, £60, good with Holland & Holland's suede jodhpurs, £630. For a more sophisticated version of the rustic look, you could retreat into the Scotch House's Antique Buchanan mohair shawl, £95, or Ralph Lauren's floor-length cable-knit cashmere sweater dress, £1,750.

No such extravagance for me, though. In our house we are having an economy drive for Christmas, so it's last year's black velvet Conran frock, given a slight kick with this year's bargain from the brilliant L.K. Bennett sale — a vicious little pair of scarlet velvet mules, £69.99 (£99.99), which even that priggish-old patriarch, Father Christmas, could hardly fail to find sexy.



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MAN ON TOP JOE JOSEPH

Why can't a woman buy more like a man?

Bowing to requests from the many thousands of readers who enthusiastically followed our last guide to buying fabulous Christmas presents that would look good in the homes of your dearest friends and relatives, we are not publishing the guide this year. This is on legal advice.

It turned out that many of the gifts we recommended actually looked good in the homes of your dearest friends and relatives only if their homes had been interior-designed by sealed molluscs.

So this year we have decided, instead, to address some deeper, more spiritual mysteries of Christmas, in particular the mystery of why women make such a song and dance about buying presents.

Knowing how much women enjoy browsing in Bond Street we even let them buy presents for our side of the family. And — I

know many men will be nodding with weary recognition here — they still *moan*. What's more, we selflessly bequeath this fun seasonal activity even though we know in our hearts that women aren't all that brilliant at buying truly interesting presents. Partly this is because many women take off from a very long runway: they start drawing up shopping lists in August, which robs them of the inventiveness that accompanies the adrenaline rush of chasing a deadline.

A woman thinks of Aunt Marjorie and remembers that Aunt Marjorie enjoys needlepoint, wears Guerlain scent and buys her jumpers at Marks & Spencer, so this woman, thinking "logically", buys her some embroidery thread, or Guerlain eau de cologne, or an M&S jumper. Men leave it to Christmas Eve to ensure that they allow their adrenaline-fired imagination no

lary slack, and then they conclude: "Why pigeonhole Aunt Marjorie? Maybe Aunt Marjorie aches to try out a new hobby if only people would stop buying her embroidery thread; or maybe a squirt of Estée Lauder, or a Prada jumper? Then we make it our Christmas mission to inject a little novelty into Aunt Marjorie's life by buying her a small tub of yacht-deck matt varnish, which happens to be available from the ship chandlery located just next to the office on the way to St Katharine Dock.

Having executed this brain-wave, many men naturally return home with Aunt Marjorie's trophy expecting at least a small thank-you from their wives. Instead they are met with the blinkered phrase "What on earth is your Aunt Marjorie — who wouldn't know a yacht from a yashmak — going to do with a tub of yacht-deck matt

varnish? And what happened to the other seven presents you agreed you would buy today?"

At such moments men don't even try to explain the difference between quality and quantity: women just wouldn't understand.

This is why smart men have learnt over the years to bite their tongue and leave the Christmas present-buying to women, who possess such butterfly-hopping brains that they're quite capable of thinking simultaneously of 14 different presents that they have to purchase — and actually buying them! — before picking up a few groceries on the way home.

Men — not allowed to shop for presents, but nevertheless being responsible adults — naturally should realise that a woman's nerves can jangle at this time of year. Men are also sensitive enough to realise that a woman's nerves can jangle at this time of year. They know that sometimes it takes

They will, for example, telephone the butcher to order the turkey and will even leave the butcher their wife's telephone number so he can call her back later and finalise details of what kind, and size, of turkey the family wants this year.

Men will also, selflessly, spend hours in Oddbins and Majestic worrying themselves stupid about which wines to buy, and about how many cases of Pilsner will be required to see the wife and children through the Boxing Day sporting fixtures on telly. Another thing men will — without even being asked — offer judgment on whether or not the trimming of the Christmas tree is an improvement over last year's trendy Mexican red chillies theme.

Men are also sensitive enough to realise that a woman's nerves can jangle at this time of year. They know that sometimes it takes

a teeny straw to break the camel's back, such as when she asks you if you have bought the present for your nephew Jamie, as agreed.

Considerate as ever, and reluctant to push her over the edge, you naturally don't tell her baldly that you haven't bought it yet because she might say something rash like: "It's Christmas Eve, moron, and the shops are all closed now!"

So, keeping your own counsel, you just lipote to the Christmas tree ("Aht Spirals of dried orange peel! Much prettier theme than last year's red chillies, dear") and you pick a present that some friends dropped round yesterday for your son, but which he hasn't yet spotted, you rip off the tag and you write "For Jamie" on it. Why? Because we new men are ecologically minded and believe in recycling in all corners of our lives. Sensitive or what?

All's fair in love and war

She is with CNN in Baghdad, he is at the centre of power. James Bone reports

James Rubin, the chief spokesman at the US State Department, has more than a professional interest in monitoring the progress of the Anglo-American bombing campaign against Iraq. Every time the dapper diplomat glances up at the television sets at Foggy Bottom that blare out the latest news from CNN, he sees his new wife in harm's way.

But Mrs Rubin, Christiane Amanpour, seems to be loving every minute of her duty as the network's correspondent in Baghdad. Even though the bombs are falling all around her perch atop the Iraqi Information Ministry, America's best-known foreign reporter is looking radiant on live television — perhaps even a little too merry for a war. Unlike many of her colleagues, she refuses to don a flak jacket and helmet.

For Washington's newest power couple, the Gulf War Mark II is a family affair. It is a peculiarity of our "global village" that a husband and wife can so dominate the coverage of an international crisis. The newlyweds, in effect, control the two great organs of information about the airstrikes. For the millions around the world glued to CNN, the drama of the military campaign is now compounded by a simultaneous soap opera about Rubin and Amanpour. Of course, the unspoken question is, will she be safe from the bombing that her husband helped to initiate?

But the half-British, half-

Iranian Amanpour, once jokingly described by a friend as a "Persian princess" is no coward. At 40, she has risen quickly through the ranks of CNN to become a gutsy veteran of the siege of Sarajevo and a host of other troublespots, from Haiti to Northern Ireland. She once even had the effrontery to upbraid President Clinton about his Bosnia policy, or lack thereof, at a conference hosted by CNN's founder, and her employer, Ted Turner.

She now divides her face-time between the famously cheap CNN — originally nicknamed the "Chicken Noodle Network" — and the far-walleted 60 Minutes on CBS television, America's most-watched weekly news magazine.

Amanpour met the tall, dark and handsome Rubin, two years her junior, in Sarajevo's shattered Holiday Inn when he visited his boss and mentor, Madeleine Albright, then the US Ambassador to the United Nations, now the Secretary of State. The pair found that they had more than their passion for Bosnia in common. After a holiday in Italy, they became engaged. Although the media-genic couple tell journalists that they are "public figures, but private lives", they succumbed to the temptation of posing for a saccharine engagement photo by Annie Leibowitz for American Vogue and organised a lavish celebrity wedding at a medie-

val castle on the shores of Lake Bracciano, north of Rome.

A couple so tied to the news cycle can scarcely escape long enough to tie the knot. After months of preparation, the festivities at their wedding in August were disrupted by the US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Albright, who had crossed the Atlantic to attend the ceremony and flew back to Washington to take charge of the crisis. The knock-on effect was that the Italian President, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, failed to show up. It would have been a bust for the paparazzi had not Amanpour's old friend John F. Kennedy Jr turned up with his glamorous wife, Carolyn Bessette. The happy couple was forced to cancel the African safari they had planned for their honeymoon.

After the back-to-back Jewish and Catholic wedding services, Rubin told guests gathered in a banquet hall lined with busts of Roman generals that he had finally ended his arduous quest to find a soulmate who would be his "other half". Amanpour assured the wedding-party that she felt just the same way, but cautioned that her spouse should be under no illusions about wifely obedience. Her comments echoed the light-hearted warning that Albright had given her protégée when she warned him that by marrying a journalist he was "sleeping with the enemy", "I am not talking in my sleep," the quick-thinking spokesman



Christiane Amanpour, the face of CNN, and her husband, James Rubin, of the US State Department, at their wedding near Rome last August

shot back. But rarely has the strange marriage of luck and flak been so clearly on display as during the repeated crises with Iraq this year.

Just last month, when Amanpour was again on CNN duty in Baghdad, the Clinton Administration called off an attack when the BS2s were already in the air because of a CNN report asserting that Baghdad had capitulated to UN demands. When American officials finally saw the actual Iraqi decision in a letter from Tariq Aziz, the Deputy Prime Minister, they discovered to their chagrin that it came with pages of conditions attached and had to spend hours forcing Baghdad to "clarify" its position. Diplomats questioned whether Washington would have cancelled the bombing on November 14 if it had refused to rely on CNN. And one wonders if the Administration would have been so willing to rely on CNN if it had not been for Amanpour whom Aziz had telephoned directly.

Nizar Hamdoon, Iraq's UN Ambassador, described the couple's on-air relationship in the memorable phrase "media tennis". This is only the latest instance of Rubin and Amanpour finding themselves protagonists in the same international drama. Amanpour was once detained by the fundamentalist Taliban movement in Afghanistan; it looked briefly as though the State Department would have to intervene to ensure her release, but in the end it did not. Then she had a ground-breaking interview with Iran's new reformist President, Muhammad Khatami. His remarks on the warming relationship between Washington and Tehran demanded a State Department response.

The globe-trotting Amanpour is still based in London and finding it difficult to pay conjugal visits to her equally well-travelled spouse, who just this week chipped his ankle while accompanying President Clinton and Albright to Israel and the Gaza Strip. Although they are expected to settle down together in Washington, or possibly New York, they will have to content themselves, for the coming days at least, with back-to-back appearances on the airwaves, the one denouncing Iraq, the other reporting on Iraqi casualties and trying to explain the Iraqi case. And how was your day at the office?



Christiane Amanpour wrestles with a gas mask during the Gulf conflict of 1991

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Touchy-feely catchee the top job

IQ is not enough in politics,
says Mary Ann Sieghart

Everyone knows that a high IQ does not guarantee political success. Just look at Derry Irvine, Keith Joseph or John Redwood. And what made Gordon Brown less attractive to his party than Tony Blair? The problem for all of these is their low EQ, the measure of emotional intelligence.

It was an American psychologist, Daniel Coleman, who came up with the idea. Emotional intelligence is the ability to empathise, to get on with other people, and of course to know oneself. In the best politicians, it leaves those who have met them with a lasting glow. The prime exponent is Bill Clinton, whose EQ, at about 170, leaves even Mr Blair in the shade.

After the two men recently gave a joint press conference, the British Prime Minister confessed himself awestruck at the American President's powers of communication, his ability to make his listeners feel good.

But Mr Blair is no slouch. I would mark him at 140. He has the knack of persuading even his enemies to like him when they meet him. Some-

The Lord Chancellor, by contrast, seems to have assumed that he could import wholesale into politics the skills needed at the Bar. All a successful commercial barrister needs is to have the best arguments and to destroy those of the other side. Likeability does not enter into it: indeed pomposity and arrogance often define the top QC. In politics, though, the minister who has the best arguments should not destroy his opponent. If he does, he may win that particular point, but revenge will come later. Diary stories will appear about his imperiousness. The higher you get in politics, the more useful it is at least to affect humility and to be attentive to colleagues' feelings.

A prime exemplar is Jack Straw, whose EQ is up in the 130s. He is punctiliously polite, rarely loses his rag and is still modest enough to mingle with his voters in Blackburn at weekends. He is not bombastic, and he values every opinion. It works. He has few enemies, and gets things done. Being very emotional does not assure a high EQ. Clare Short is all emotion, but she is

It was a
master
stroke
sending
Mo to
Ulster

not good at gauging the effect on others. She is a "mimephant": as sensitive as a mime as when it comes to her own feelings, as thick-skinned as an elephant when it comes to others'. Her EQ is 80.

Nor does a high EQ ensure likeability. Peter Mandelson, who scores about 130, is excellent at

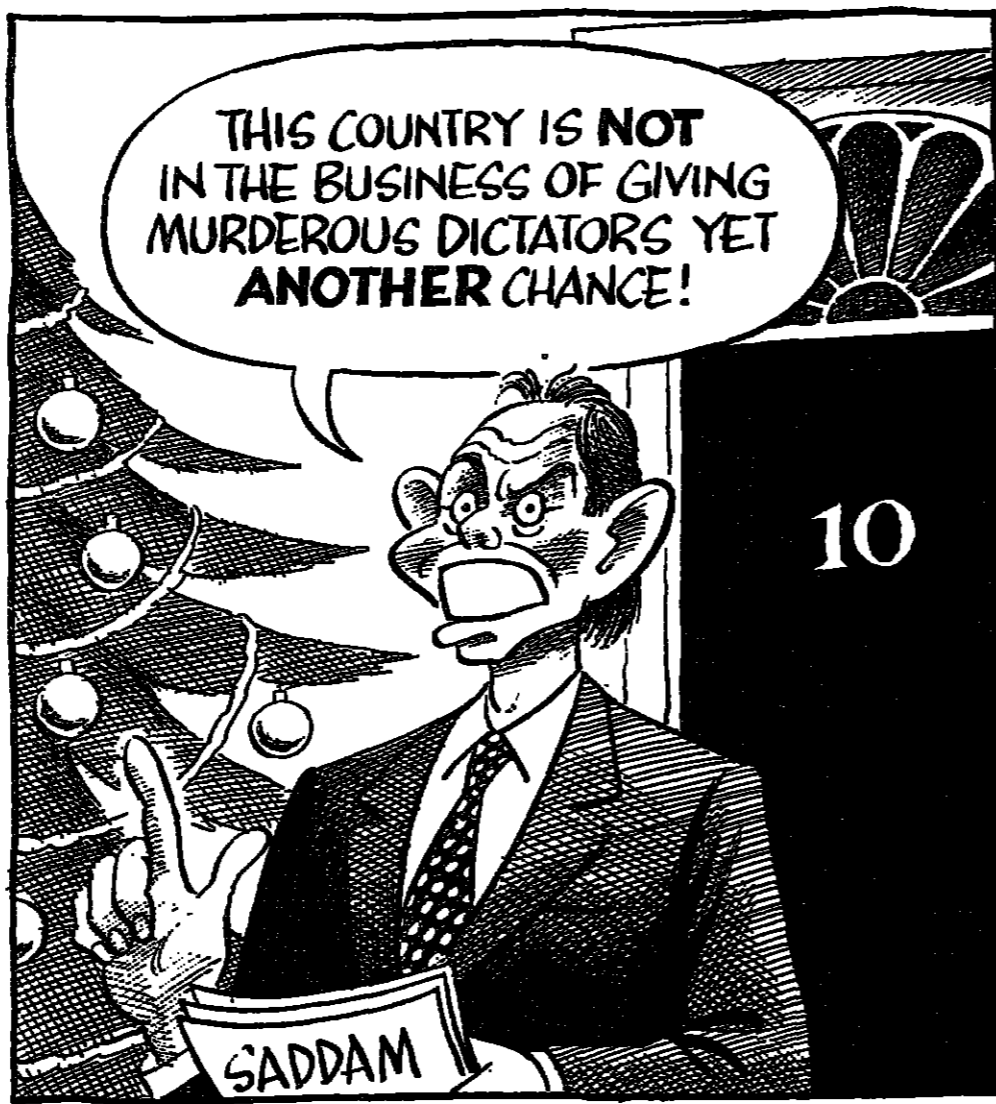
judging the effect of his actions and remarks on others. But since his intention is more often to induce feelings of paranoia than confidence, the outcome is hardly likely to be instant popularity.

Some politicians use their EQ selectively. Margaret Thatcher was hugely attentive to the people who worked for her while blundering blithely over the feelings of her colleagues. When Geoffrey Howe once had a trifle spilt in his lap at Chequers, she was full of concern for the poor clumsy waitress but offered no solace, let alone a napkin, to him.

The British politician with the highest EQ is Mo Mowlam. People adore her, whatever their beliefs. It was a masterstroke to send someone like her into that most emotional of battlegrounds, Northern Ireland. All the IQs in the world had failed to solve the problem. And even Dr Mowlam, when she first arrived, alienated the hard men with her touchy-feelness. But she also discomfited them, and that act of unsettling allowed old positions to be dislodged and new ones to form.

Even the combination of towering EQ and IQ is no bastion against political failure. President Clinton, struggling against impeachment, can testify to that. For there is one other dimension that politicians have to beware of. If only he had a lower EQ...

maryann.sieghart@the-times.co.uk



Stone Age strategy

Bombing Iraq won't work. Saddam is victorious at the West's expense

It's Tommy that an Tommy that an Tommy 'ow's yer soul; but it's 'Thim red line of heroes' when the drums begin to roll. As Britain's thin red line starts to bomb Iraq, we are asked to wish them safe return and give those who sent them the benefit of the doubt. I gladly concede the former. But the benefit of what doubt? If there was any doubt I would concede that too. The British Cabinet is struggling to disarm a distant dictator through a hesitant policy left by its predecessors. If the policy was a gamble, there might be doubt from which to benefit. There is no gamble. The outcome of the policy will be failure. This is the fourth bombing campaign against President Saddam Hussein and the sixth "last warning". None has worked. Speaking in the House of Commons yesterday, Tony Blair gave no sense that this one is different.

Jingoists can cheer and the tabloids thrill to a British "blitz", but blitzes need objectives. The Government's declared objective is to end the threat posed by Saddam's chemical, biological and possibly nuclear weapons to the stability of the Gulf. This threat is presumed to exist because of his 1990 invasion of Kuwait and his "crimes against humanity" in suppressing Kurds and other minorities. No neighbouring state has requested Western action to remove the threat, but that seems not to matter. The United Nations has demanded free access to Iraq's territory and imposed draconic economic sanctions. Two states, Britain and America, have bombed.

The British and American Governments have in effect admitted to being trapped. Sanctions have failed to dislodge Saddam. Bombing him has failed, arming his enemies has failed, isolating him has failed. These failures are not cost-free. They have a price in the thousands of lives of those whom they were alleged to help. Iraqi citizens. It is easy to blame this cost on Saddam. He has plenty of blood on his hands. But it is not Saddam who is inflicting this particular long-range capital punishment on Iraqis. It is the British Cabinet, alone in Europe. At some point in such a catalogue of failure, mature politicians ask what has gone wrong.

It is glaringly obvious that the mistake was to leave Saddam in power in 1991, when his country was crawling with Western troops. Mr

Blair implied yesterday that his duplicity could not have been predicted. This is naive. There were many advocates of a "march on Baghdad". Trying to topple Saddam might have been dangerous and illegal. But the means were to hand. The West demanded a neutered Iraq, but funkled ensuring it and began the hesitancy that has led to the present panic. It turned to weapons that it knew would never work. Economic sanctions, support to opposition groups and aerial bombardment have proved a cruel delusion. Sanctions merely create siege economies. They enrich rather than undermine corrupt regimes. They are the fantasy football of moral imperialism. Saddam, Milosevic, Castro and Gaddafi are living proof of that.

Yesterday Mr Blair gazed on this wreckage — and declared more of the same. Like the generals at Passchendaele, he ordered up more whizzbangs. Like Eden at Suez, facing a similarly incorrigible Arab leader, he declared "We act because we must... he cannot be left in possession...". The military objective was wisely scaled down to that of "degrading and diminishing" Saddam's arsenal, rather than the now unrealistic goal of destroying it. The message is that, without inspection on the ground, destruction without inspection must be attempted from the air.

As a means of disarmament, bombing is a brute logic. The world's most brilliant military machine should be able to "degrade" a few as yet unlocated Scuds or chemicals, in among the blasted barracks, suburban dwellings, office blocks, roads and Iranian settlements. But since computerised targeting is so inexact, the "degrade and diminish" policy must require regular reinforcement, the blanket bombing of any sites to which weapons might be moved. When asked what happens after the bombing, Mr Blair could reply only that "We will ensure that his military capability is

not rebuilt". In other words, after the bombing, more bombing. This is the most primitive form of international policing. Saddam's weapons are reputedly mobile, and those with chemical and biological components are highly unstable. Britain accuses Saddam of using such weapons against his own people. But by bombing his stores, Britain risks unleashing those same chemical weapons on the Iraqi people. A missile that cannot distinguish between Iraq and Iran is hardly likely to tell a tank of sarin from a phial of anthrax. This appalling danger will presumably continue until someone at the Pentagon pretends that "degrading" has been achieved. Then Saddam will resume his stockpiling. You cannot police such men from the air.

The only doubt from which the Government might hope to draw benefit is that mayhem will breed mayhem. "Bomb them into the Stone Age" was the hype of American generals over North Vietnam, a phrase repeated in 1990 when the Air Force claimed it could free Kuwait without ground troops. Air forces live in a world of their own, detached from the violence they unleash yet with a passionate faith in its political efficacy. What is frightening is how easily they seduce prime ministers into this world. Of all the ghosts to flit through Labour's Downing Street, Bomber Harris is surely the most surprising.

Dictatorship is the art of survival. The best way forward that Mr Blair could offer the Commons yesterday was for "Saddam Hussein to come to his senses". But that was the objective before. Saddam had lost his senses. He defied the UN inspectors, rallied his people to his cause and survived. Barring accidents, his senses will give him the same advice now. Saddam is not the naughty child awaiting nanny's bromide of Downing Street mythology. He is not going to turn on the World Service one morning, cry "Gosh, that Robin Cook has a good point", and rush out to

disarm the Republican Guard. He is a shrewd politician whom British and American policy has helped to keep in power. Mr Blair rightly protests against cynics who put the bombing down to Mr Clinton's domestic troubles. But one can see why the thought occurs.

In reality, the plot is slipping away. The new world order is flaky. The cosmetic diplomacy of Mr Clinton, to which Mr Blair has become addicted, is not working in Ulster. It is not working in Kosovo. It is not working in Palestine. It is not working in Iraq. Western interventionism means American and British interventionism and has lost its coherence. Britain and America can send cameras and charisma round the globe. They can drop bombs and impoverish peoples. But they have none of the consistent potency of the British Empire or Cold War America at its prime.

In Iraq the root of the trouble is simple. The West cannot decide between peace and war. I am for peace. Saddam is not such a big threat to his region or to Britain to merit this campaign. He is best undermined by contact, trade, wealth, open borders and fostered dissent. They are the true weapons of modern liberalism. They will rot him and all his kind faster than a thousand bombs.

War requires conviction. In Iraq, as in Suez, Britain lacks the full courage of its convictions. Military action, as every theorist knows, must be allowed to pursue its own logic to victory. Subject it to constraint, make it half-hearted or temporary, and you damn it to ineffectiveness. Britain may want Saddam's arsenal destroyed and his power base undermined, but not badly enough. It did not want it badly enough in 1990, and does not today. Badly enough means proper war. Proper wars are fought by ground troops.

The new Anglo-American bonding may feel it does not need UN approval for its overseas interventions. But it does need guts. It needs the collective will to win. We are playing with Saddam and playing cruelly with his people. When Mr Cook yesterday promised "no proposal, no preparation, no intention" of putting ground troops into Iraq, he offered Saddam another victory. That man needs no more victories.

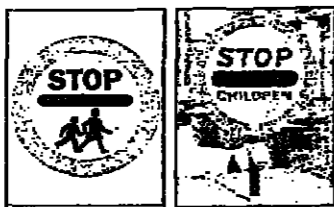
comment@the-times.co.uk

Simon
Jenkins

Sign language

THE Great British Lollipop is under threat. Ministers are to recall every single lollipop so they can be harmonised with those in our beloved Principality, Wales. The traditional sign (right) has offended delicate Welsh sensitivities after the language lobby there argued that the word "children" must be removed because its Welsh equivalent is "plant". So the Government bowed to fears that Valley-dwelling drivers — and presumably those in, say, East Anglia, too — will mow down children in vegetable-human confusion.

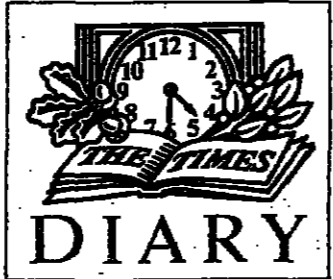
First to break was the Welsh Office. But then the Department of Transport decided to banish the old stick, first wielded in 1953, and replace it throughout the UK with two children hand-in-hand and the command, "stop" (similar to the design, left). Local authorities will pay for the changeover of the nation's 17,000 lollipops. "The new sign must be used from January 1," says the DOT. "Our tests have shown that people take in pictures quicker than words." Unless the words are Welsh, of course.



200 cruise missiles were heading east. Young William sought Maggie in the throng and a secret war council was quickly convened.

IT MUST be war, Maggie is back in charge. At 9.40 on Wednesday evening the Krug was going down rather nicely at the riverside pad of Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare. Then William Hague received a call from Tony Blair. A discreet ante-room was found, and Hague learnt that

A TIP from an impeccable source enabled The Sun to splash Wednesday's "Baghdad blitz" across early editions. David Yelland, Editor, was taken aside by Robin Cook, in mode, at the Foreign Office Christmas hash a couple of hours



before the strike. It soon became clear that a revision of the front page was necessary. Yelland commanded a side-room to direct operations at Wapping by phone.

"WE LIKE gaffes and scandals at the Foreign Office," Cook told me. "We just prefer them to happen to other people." A dramatic exit was in order: "Must go, got a war to run. Merry Christmas."

Word weary

TWO words by John Lennon are being flogged for £15,000. Mags Bros is offering a single leaf of A4 from 1969, signed by Lennon and Yoko Ono, bearing a single, sharp swearword — repeated 103 times in a tabular layout — and a solitary "you" in the centre. The "poem" was submitted by Lennon to the

Barrow Poets, who snuffed it in the drawer where it has lain since: "It is obviously influenced by the French avant-garde."

THE Duke of Edinburgh deployed his customary charm on a group of youngsters. During a discussion, Prince Philip used a German word that passed them by. One girl said she had worked in Germany for children with learning difficulties. "That's what this lot have got," growled the Duke.

Home leg

LORD CRANBORNE'S conspiratorial whisperings with Tony Blair



"Just declaring an interest!"

have inflamed intellectual passions on the Right. The Conservative Philosophy Group, founded by Jonathan Aitken and Roger Scruton to dispel the notion that the Tories were the stupid party, is to in spur Cranborne's hospitality.

Jessica Douglas-Home, one of the chatterers, speaks of the good lord's "betrayal" and has vowed "never again to set foot" in his home, scene of some of the more earnest discussions. Jessica, widow of Charles Douglas-Home — once Editor of this parish — initiated Scruton into the charms of hunting by lending him a horse called Dumbo while he stayed with her in the Cotswolds, and they have remained friends since. Time to switch the meetings to her manor.

LORD HOFFMANN, the law lord whose vote put the dampeners on General Pinochet's Christmas, been reflecting on his verdict. "I meant to declare my interest [with Amnesty] but I forgot," he confided before fleeing to Hong Kong.

String along

HITHERTO Sophie Anderson has been regarded, if at all, for her physical statistics rather than her IQ. But perhaps the brassiere model has more nous than cynics imagined, for she is pragmatic



about her forthcoming nuptials to Lord Hanson's lad, Robert. "I'm not going to take his name," she confides, before joking about the attractions of his engorged bank balance. Anderson, at the launch of Rupert Steiner's study of entrepreneurs, was impressed with that other moneybags, Peter Stringfellow. "Can she dance at your club?" one of her entourage asked. His interest waned when Sophie said she would charge £2 million. "I'll keep the Diary piggybank locked."

JASPER GERARD

Philip Howard



A proverb in time saves a sub-editor a forced rhyme

Jingles have replaced proverbs, in the same way and for the same causes that focus groups have taken the place of the parish pump and soaps have substituted sermons. Both ancient and modern versions of the so-called can contain wit and wisdom as well as consensus. But Woe and Grief, Grief and Woe. We miss those daff old proverbs so.

A proverb may rhyme, as a mnemonic for illiterate generations. "Birds of a feather flock together." Like many proverbs this comes from the Authorised Version (*Ecclesiasticus*): "The birds will resort unto their like, so will truth return unto them that practise in her." The Bible and stained glass windows were the television for their ages. And without their stories (and those of Plutarch, Livy, Tasso), half the paintings in the National Gallery and the Louvre are unintelligible. It is a shame that we no longer make pointless rhyming proverbs like "Lazy gnuv need running shoes". "Swallows be leavin', girls be comin'": "The Battle of Eurostar (or Waterloo) was won on Old England's national dish of Lager and Vindaloo."

Proverbs work by assonance as well as rhyme. "A stitch in time saves nine." "It's a Wise Child that knows its own Father, they say; but Keith Wiseman and England's football management know Sweet FA." "A Tale never loses in the telling — but England's Cricket Tail is worth forgetting."

A good proverb should have a converse that contradicts it. "Too many cooks spoil the broth. But on the other hand, many hands make light work. One does not moisten a postage stamp with the Thames. But, on the other hand, send a soiled dress to the cleaners twice rather than preserve it in your bottom drawer uncleared for an impeachable day. Pinochet knows why, and he also knoweth wherefore. No leg is too short to reach the ground, nor no spin-doctor too tall to miss the evening news. A hit by a middle-aged Cruise Singer on television is better than a miss by a Cruise Missile. But, on the other hand, Domestics of the DTI Unite. You have nothing to put in your Millennium Eggshell but bad yolk."

When their meanings are discernible, proverbs are little better than clichés crossed with the received wisdom of old fellows and old wives. But their age and durability suggest that they satisfy a social and linguistic need for something old and universally familiar. Before Kilroy and the other smarmy public confessional shows, proverbs were the received wisdom of their audiences, as contradictory but comfortable as old slippers. From coals of fire to the dog returning to his vomit, dozens survive from Proverbs. Before Every(wo) man became entitled to his (her) opinion and was elected a saloon-bar expert, proverbs were treated as authority. More meaningful than a prime ministerial statement. More truthful even than a television news reader.

So as early as *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer makes Pandarus say: "It is nat good a slepyng hound to wake." And Shakespeare's Shylock says: "Fast bind, fast find. / A proverb never stale in thrifty mind." So much more fun than the vacant gibberish of official spokespersons and opinion polls. But then, the Wisdom of Solomon and Aesop is older than that of even the most thoughtful focus group (oxymoron). For so many focus groups, so many opinions. Chaucer said it: "As many heeds, as many wittes there been." But Terence got there before him in the *Phormia*: "Quot homines tot sententiae." And I bet that Terence was merely repeating a proverb he had heard in the Agora.

And of course, we have lost the knack of recognising it. "No names, no pack drill" comes from the 1914-18 War. Computerspeak with its jargon of dongling and WYSIWYGS is a proverbially rich field. When it broke down, always just before deadline, the computer was said to "crash". The new name for this catastrophe is a "fall-down" or possibly a "fall-down". Terminological precision is the last thing to bother about during such a calamity. But GIGO, Garbage in Garbage Out, is a computer proverb, first recorded in 1964. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," is more recent. For proverbs may be better no parsnips, but they are still potreaux vinaigrette.



IN TIME OF DANGER

Republicans are acting against the world's best interest

The sombre statements by Bill Clinton and Tony Blair yesterday reflected their sense of the difficulty of the course on which they are embarked. This joint air campaign against Iraq is a watershed, breaking with the pattern of the past seven years in two important respects. The first is that both leaders have had the political courage to act in the interest of global order, and as the dictates of international law and security require, without the express support of the paralysed "international community" or of allied governments, such as Italy and France, which have shown themselves either faint-hearted or, which is worse, cynically opportunistic. Saddam gambled that America and Britain would not do this. He was wrong.

The second is that although the stated objective remains the resumption of effective UNSCOM inspections, that may well not be achievable while Saddam remains in power. That leaves military containment; and even if, as it must, this campaign continues until significant damage has been inflicted on Saddam Hussein's capacity to make, conceal or deploy banned weapons systems, the gains will only be temporary so long as his dictatorship lasts. This is therefore unlikely to be the last such military engagement with Iraq. Each campaign, including this one, will bring injury and death to Iraqi civilians — and whether the casualties are in fact caused by airstrikes, or faked by an unscrupulous regime that would have no hesitation in doing so, their impact could be further to destabilise the Arab world. This is, therefore, a risky strategy, even if, as Mr Blair said yesterday, to take military action is far less risky than deployable weapons of mass destruction would be in Saddam's murderous hands. That is the breakthrough which must be prevented, even if it requires repeated targeting of his assets.

The more decisive this assault can be made, therefore, the better. Saddam himself is a legitimate target, whether or not this is publicly avowed; at the least, the aim must be to cripple the nervous system

of his regime. Political destabilisation is rarely achievable through air attacks; but to render the regime functionally ineffective is logically an integral part of the strategic objective. The apparent destruction of military intelligence and secret police headquarters in Baghdad in the first wave of bombing confirms that the Pentagon, which knows a good deal more about Iraq's intelligence networks than it did only a year ago, has rightly made them as important a target as Iraq's suspect installations. The special security service controlled by Saddam's son Qusay must be a priority; it manages Iraq's illicit military procurement, its biological weapons facilities and the concealment of banned missiles, munitions and chemical and biological substances.

Given the effort Iraq has put into constructing deep reinforced shelters, this ambitious strategy cannot be carried out without hitting Iraq hard, and without, in all probability, taking more than the few days left before Ramadan. Only if hostilities continue until serious damage has been done will Arab leaders, who have seen Saddam come through previous airstrikes with his popular appeal in the region enhanced, take courage. This time, he must genuinely be weakened.

Yesterday's decision by Republican leaders to go ahead with the Clinton impeachment hearings today is, in this grave context, highly irresponsible. Whatever his views on Mr Clinton, it is folly for Trent Lott, the Senate Majority Leader, implicitly to have questioned the integrity of his fellow Republican William Cohen, who as Defence Secretary has sworn that the only factor at stake in this decision was the national interest. Norman Schwarzkopf, the Gulf War commander, endorses that military judgment. President Clinton's necessary authority as Commander-in-Chief has been called in question just when it is most required. This untimely display of partisan politics serves neither justice, nor respect for the American Constitution, nor American leadership in the world.

PEER PRESSURE

A ruling that should have profound judicial implications

The keystone of the rule of law, Lord Denning once argued, is the independence of judges. It is the only respect in which, he said, Britain makes any real separation of powers. That independence is not solely from the executive or legislature; it should also mean independence from the material being judged. This is especially true in circumstances where, as in the case of General Pinochet, uncharted legal territory is being contemplated. The five law lords led by Lord Browne-Wilkinson have taken a brave and unprecedented step in effectively censuring the conduct of Lord Hoffmann, their close and trusted peer. As a result the question of whether or not the general enjoys immunity from his alleged crimes will need to be re-examined.

Although this decision will not have been comfortable, it is compelling in its logic. Lord Hoffmann is entitled to take an active interest in the work of Amnesty or any other charity. The link was not in itself any reason for him to resign himself to an unnecessarily exposed position.

Lord Hoffmann, an intelligent man of undoubted honour, must now consider whether he should offer the Lord Chancellor his resignation. He is entitled to wait until the full reasons for the ruling on his actions are made available next month. If, as Alun Jones, QC, argued for the Spanish

Government this week, Lord Hoffmann did not declare his link with Amnesty because he assumed that it was widely known, then he made an error in judgment that casts real doubt on his capacity to continue in office with credibility.

There are, however, wider issues at stake and deeper implications. They concern the manner in which the highest court conducts its business. As Lord Irvine of Lairg made clear in a letter to Lord Browne-Wilkinson it would be entirely unacceptable for this sort of mistake to be repeated. At present, the law lords have wide individual discretion in deciding what constitutes a conflict in their interests. In the rule-bound, rights-based, era on which the law has embarked, shortly to be reinforced by the Human Rights Act, it would be ironic if the senior ranks of the judiciary were the last example of self-regulation. As the senior law lord, Lord Browne-Wilkinson should seek to set out formal standards for these matters.

It should also be considered whether it is right that decisions of vast constitutional significance should be taken by only five of the 12 law lords. A 3-2 divide on such occasions might have been reached if only the composition of the court had been different. This uncertainty can only undermine the moral authority and hence the legitimacy of the law. The inevitably abstract terrain concerning individual and collective rights and the boundaries between domestic, European, and international law are likely to lead to more cases where, in contrast to the ruling issued yesterday, unanimity is unusual. The law lords will need to explore institutional reform in the light of new and more demanding responsibilities.

EVER GREEN

The cruise crooner's lesson for the not so very young

In contemporary culture, youth and beauty steal easy success. But pop singers, like sportsmen, move from superstardom to pensionable status with startling speed, which is why it is heartening to learn of the success of Jane McDonald, the voluptuous Wakefield chanteuse who, at the age of 35, is jostling to top the Christmas charts. After years of touting her talent around bingo halls and dinner dances, Jane McDonald had accepted that her lifelong ambition of becoming a star was unlikely to happen. Eighteen months ago, she packed her sequinned stage costumes away and was preparing for a future as a corporate wife, when a cruise company offered her a job on one of its ships. The BBC filmed the trip, and as its fly-on-the-wall documentary, *The Cruise*, soared up the ratings, Jane McDonald, caught on camera having her roots done or nervously fidgeting backstage, found herself an unwitting star. An abandoned career was relaunched.

May Jane McDonald's example give hope to all those hundreds of disheartened singers who, having failed to achieve their ambitions by the end of their twenties, turn their backs on their chosen careers and start to attend Cliff Richard concerts instead. Such singers may know that age

brings expressiveness and timbre of voice; that Edith Piaf, Marie Lloyd and Marlene Dietrich gave their finest performances in later life. But too many contemporary promoters only recognise lissom youth.

Naturally, the success of Jane McDonald in large part proves the power of television. But it is also an indication of a recent shift in focus. Thirty-somethings are the children of the Sixties. They are the first generation which, courtesy of the Pill, has been able to postpone childbearing in favour of a career. In a culture of keep fit and anti-wrinkle creams, broadening girth and slackening skin can be staved off. One's twenties can simply become a dress rehearsal for a subsequent decade, a time to make experiments and mistakes, before success arrives with the seductive confidence of maturity.

Cultural history is speckled with those who struggled for years before they finally flourish. Spice Girl-style stardom can prove startlingly evanescent. It merely captures the mood of the moment. But at the end of a year in which successful modern icons such as Madonna, Michael Jackson and Michelle Pfeiffer have all turned forty, it is safe to say that the thirties are too soon ever to say never again.

Allies fulfil their bombing pledge

From Mr Robert A. Gerard

Sir, As an American now living in England and as one who served in a previous Republican Government, I wish to express my dismay and embarrassment at the refusal of Republican leaders fully to support the British-American intervention in Iraq, claiming that its timing was designed to delay the impeachment vote. It can only be seen as an act of penitence at the interruption of a partisan gambit which had already been discredited by the American electorate in November.

Would not an attack in September, whilst diplomatic efforts were under way, have been seen as an attempt to influence the November elections? And would not an attack in mid-November, after still another promise of co-operation from Saddam had been extracted, have been seen as an attempt to delay the proceedings in the Judiciary Committee? Britain and America struck precisely when they said they would strike: in the immediate wake of the first UN finding that Saddam had broken his promise to comply.

This betrayal of the Commander-in-Chief in a time of armed conflict is in no way ameliorated by their empty gesture of support for the troops on the scene. To expect the military forces to soldier bravely whilst questioning the motives of those who put them in harm's way is an act of utter hypocrisy. It stands in stark contrast to the immediate and unequivocal statements of Messrs Hague and Ashdown.

Faithfully yours,
ROBERT A. GERARD
(Assistant Secretary,
US Treasury, 1975-76),
Sebastian House,
Sebastian Street, EC1V 0HE,
December 17.

From Major P. B. Weller (ret'd)

Sir, I have no doubt that the Prime Minister and the President are correct in authorising the present attack on Iraq. All else has failed, and it is what they told Saddam Hussein would happen if he did not comply with the very proper UN requirements.

What is not apparent to the other members of the Security Council and to Iraq's frightened neighbours is whether there is anywhere the will to do what was not done after Desert Storm. It is easy to say now, but the dictator and his regime should have been replaced then. Economic sanctions since have failed to achieve this end and it is unrealistic to think that bombardment by itself will do better. If there appears now a compelling case for Iraq's occupation and the establishment of a responsible regime, it seems essential that the Arab world and the West deal with this jointly and then set up a mechanism for action in the future. Is there any other choice for either in the face of the horrors that sooner or later might be loosed upon all? Oil is of little use to either producer or consumer if both are dead.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL WELLS,
Morcombe Farm House,
Caudle Green,
Cheltenham GL53 9PR,
December 17.

From Mr Michael Wehle

Sir, In your listing of US weapons today (later editions) you mention Advanced Unitary Penetrators: designed to penetrate 10ft of steel-reinforced concrete, exploding only when its sensors detect hidden laboratories where secret weapons are being developed.

I have no doubt that bombs can determine how many walls they've passed through, as you report, but I simply do not accept that a bomb can distinguish between a hidden laboratory where secret weapons are being developed and a bomb shelter where women and children are sleeping.

I believe that such descriptions are designed to distract public attention from the indiscriminate nature of most aerial bombardment.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL WEHLE,
96 Jersey Street, Apartment 2,
San Francisco, CA 94114-3929.
mwehle@wehle.so.com
December 17.

Clinton impeachment

From Dr Marvin Harner

Sir, I am amazed at the implications of your leading article, "Impeachment hour" (December 14). In the United States, lying to a grand jury is a serious matter.

It makes no difference whether the lie concerns a sexual encounter or affair of state. One cannot have a society based on the rule of law if we decide whether the truth should be shaved because of public opinion.

Yours faithfully,
MARVIN HARNER,
1654 Fircrest Drive,
Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034.
harnerma@kpnwaa.mts.kpnw.org
December 15.

Business letters, page 31

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0177-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0177-782 5000

Oxford protest on traffic planning

From Dr G. Marshall, FBA, Provost of The Queen's College, Oxford, and Mr Anthony Smith, President of Magdalen College, Oxford

Sir, Concerns have recently been expressed in your columns about Oxford's attitude to the conservation of listed buildings (letters, December 4 and 9). Little publicity outside Oxford has been given to the fact that awaits the city's High Street in the new year, when the city and county councils plan to turn it into a dedicated thorough-way for an unlimited number of buses, with a variety of street furniture, including traffic lights, bus stops, turning circles, traffic surveillance cameras and loading bays.

Diversion of High Street through-traffic into the university science area north of the High will cause congestion and pollution there and well beyond, for which the council's suggested remedies are merely traffic-light adjustment and road humps. The scheme in general shows little regard for the convenience of the community or the needs of the elderly and disabled.

All of this has been brought about by a curious process. A variety of objectors, including the High Street traders, Blackwell's and the University, and colleges, pressed for a public inquiry. This normally allows objectors to local authority proposals to have their views considered by an inspector, appointed by a minister and reporting to him. However, the

inspector who carried out an inquiry early this year under the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, was not appointed by a minister but by the two councils; his report has gone merely to them to decide on the validity of the objections to their own proposals. Unsurprisingly, they have been persuaded by the force of their own arguments.

The detailed proposals were considered only in a small joint working party and were not debated by the county council. Moreover, in the middle of the statutory inquiry procedure, Glenda Jackson, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, appeared in Oxford and publicly supported the councils' measures. Letters to the Secretary of State for the Environment are now passed to the same Under-Secretary, who in turn passes them back to the county council.

This procedure bears little relation to local democracy or to natural justice. It is desirable that the Secretary of State for the Environment should examine his powers under the relevant legislation in order to secure that these issues affecting Oxford's environment should be considered in a fair and objective manner.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY MARSHALL,
Provost, The Queen's College,
ANTHONY SMITH,
President, Magdalen College,
Oxford OX1 4AW,
December 14.

Wreck of the 'Hood'

From Mr Charles Markuss

Sir, I believe Sir Ludovic Kennedy (letter, December 14) to be mistaken in comparing the loss of HMS Hood with the three British battleships lost at Jutland.

At Jutland the battleships were not lost because "plunging" German shells penetrated their deck armour. At the ranges at which the German shells struck — 10,000 to 17,000 yards — the shells hit the vertical armour faces or turret crowns, not the decks. The ships blew up because the turret armour of the battleships was easily pierced and because British cordite was unstable and flashed when ignited, whereas German cordite merely burned violently.

Safety procedures on British ships were lamentable. A veritable trail of unprotected charges led down from the gun turrets into the magazines, just waiting for a German shell or a piece of red-hot armour to set the first one off. German charges awaiting use were kept in flame-proof metal cases until ready for loading.

As a result German ships had entire turret crews wiped out by ammunition fires, but the ships did not explode like British ones.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES MARKUSS,
23 Melrose Road, Little Lever,
Bolton, Lancashire BL3 1DX,
December 14.

From Mr David Mearns

Sir, Yesterday's letters regarding my plans to locate and film the wreck of

HMS Hood raise a number of important issues that require clarification.

As your report of December 9 made clear, one of the objects of our expedition is to provide conclusive video graphic evidence of the precise damage inflicted on the Hood by the Bismarck. The testimonies of the eye-witnesses varied greatly as to the location of the erupting conflagration, and many of their observations were made from great distances and in the midst of battle.

Of equal, if not greater importance, is our aim to commemorate the life of the Hood and the men who served and died on her. The Hood Association has suggested that a bronze plaque inscribed with the names of the 1,418 men who perished should be laid on the side of the sunken battleship, as a fitting honour for their service in battle.

I am fully aware that the wreck of the Hood is a war grave and that the Military Remains Act of 1986 protects her from unauthorised disturbance. The expedition, should it be funded, is intended only for confirmation purposes, and we have no plans to remove any artefacts or steel samples, even for scientific study.

This promise is the fundamental basis on which we have received so much support from the Hood Association, the Royal British Legion, Ted Briggs (the sole living survivor) and many other associated relatives. It will be kept.

Sincerely,
DAVID L. MEARNS
(Survey Director),
Blue Water Recoveries Ltd,
Haslemere House, Lower Street,
Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2PX,
December 15.

Music charts

From Mr Tony Cox

Sir, The letter from Sir Tim Rice and Lord Lloyd-Webber about the pop charts (December 9) paints a rose-tinted but inaccurate picture of the rectitude of the music business in bygone times. "Hyping" records into the charts (as it was then known) was a fairly standard practice even in the halcyon, Beatlemania 1960s, when a straightforward bung to the trade press could do the trick.

Attempts to improve the statistical rigour of chart compilation inevitably led to more sophisticated methods of fiddling, and there have been recurrent scandals of a similar nature within the industry ever since. So much for "faithfully and honestly" recording the affections of the public.

Perhaps the sad difference today is that, while in the past record companies knew that this was cheating, in the management-jargon-obsessed present they convince themselves that it is efficient marketing and sound business practice.

Citing the Boyzone record as an example while not acknowledging his own interest as one of the song's creators" was disingenuous on the part of your noble correspondent who, it seems, is using your columns as a forum to carry on a personal spat with his record company.

Yours faithfully,
TONY COX,
Aros Lodge, Taborbury,
Isle of Mull PA75 6QB,
tony@rosparc.cix.co.uk
December 10.

Swiss vote

From Mr Peter Tray

Sir, Oh dear. You appear to have dropped a clanger, so to speak, in today's editorial on "The New Dreifuss".

The (half) canton which you cite is actually Appenzell Innerrhoden (Rhoden = forest clearing, not Innerrhoden (Inner testicles)).

Yours faithfully,
PETER TRAY,
707 High Road, N12 0BT,
December 10.

From Mr Andrew Scadding

Sir, Sir Tim Rice and Lord Lloyd-Webber claim that "typical decisions have made the UK Top Forty little more than a guide to the most successful record company marketing departments". In fact the play they describe, withdrawing one single from the competition in order to promote the chances of a second, seems to have as much marketing logic as cutting down one windmill to leave more wind for another.

Common sense suggests that established supporters of the musicians will predominate amongst early purchasers of a new release. As time and hype do their work, the song will attract a following of its own, and the proportion of purchasers new to the group and its music will tend to rise as a proportion of the whole. After all, few fans are so loyal that they will go out and buy the same song, week in, week out.

Thus by ensuring that Boyzone's *No Matter What* is no longer included in the charts, Polydor may have achieved two spectacular marketing own goals.

First, by preventing the established song from continuing to recruit new, potentially loyal, supporters of Boyzone, and second by denying the group and the company any prospect of a marketing coup — a double appearance in the record charts.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW SCADDING,
Danum House, Ednaston,
Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 3AE.
andrew@scaddingdemon.co.uk
December 12.

Waste of time

From Mr Lorne Mackillop

Sir, Your report "Government to tell teenagers all they need to know" (December 14) demonstrates that the Government continues to waste its time and taxpayers' money. It is a well-established fact that teenagers already know everything.

Yours faithfully,
LORNE MACKILLOP,
16 St Mary's Road,
Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 1QD.

Hark the herald e-mails sing

From Dr C. Whetton

Sir, A particular scourge of modern society is the e-mail greetings card. This year has seen the coming of the animated card which promises to scale new peaks of file size and to plumb new depths of bad taste.

Earlier this year I received a Rosh Hashanah greeting (from the US, naturally) which, apart from taking up 4.7 megabytes of file space, included an animation involving Bill Clinton in flagrante. Yesterday I received the first e-mail greeting of the current season: an animated Santa Claus drove his reindeer through the sky, in clear violation of all aviation safety procedures, while *Jingle Bells* played in the background. The animation repeated indefinitely, with Santa alternately wishing me — by name, but inevitably misspelled — "Merry Christmas" in both English and Finnish.

On attempting to stop this horror, I was treated to a one-minute advertising display telling me where I could buy a similar greeting and for how much. Needless to say, the greeting came from an important client but one who, hopefully, does not read *The Times*.

Is there any way of dealing with this problem? Preferably one which involves a level of retaliation appropriate to the crime.

Yours faithfully,
C. WHETTTON,
Satakunnankatu 40 B18,
33230 Tampere, Finland,
December 14.

Christmas deities

From Dr Jane Irons

Sir, Emerging from the Tube station at Oxford Circus to view the Christmas decorations, I was as appalled as Libby Purves ("Lighten our darkness — dimly, please", Weekend, December 12).

Our deities today may well be the giants of commercialism, but do they need further propitiation — let alone such public celebration — in this blatant and tasteless way? What magic here for children, or indeed adults, who might for once prefer to contemplate something other than fizzy drinks and fish fingers?

What escape from a very material world? Lighten our darkness, yes — but not like this.

Yours sincerely,
JANE IRONS,
The Orchard,
Cross Oak Road, Berkhamsted,
Hertfordshire HP4 3JB,
December 13.

Heaven and Hell

From Mr Bernard Kaukas

Sir, Magnus Linklater, in his article on the stern teachings of the Kirk (December 10), reports that Robert Louis Stevenson, as well as being in "extreme terror of Hell" inflicted on him by a Calvinist nurse, was also filled with "sickening terror" at the thought of Heaven. Apologetically, Hugh Kenner tells us in *The Sinking Island* (Barrie and Jenkins, 1988) that Rudyard Kipling was once asked as a child to repeat the teaching of Sunday School to little Ford Madox Ford, who had been absent on the occasion.

"If you are good, Fordie," began Rudyard, "you will go to a place on the clouds; and there will be harps. You will sit on the cloud and sing praises to the Lord, and that is what you will do for ever and ever. You will wear a kind of white dress. And there will be creatures like Mama, but with great wings." And Fordie's face grew longer and longer. "But," continued young Kipling the realist, "if you are bad, you will go to a much worse place."

Yours truly,
BERNARD KAUKAS,
13 Lynwood Road, Ealing, W5 1UQ,
December 10.

Seasonal stress

From Mr Philip Joseph

Sir, You report that shopping puts men under stress (later editions, December 2; see also letters, December 10 and 15).

However, shopping is as nothing compared with the stress that will be caused by the Cable & Wireless advertisement I saw in *The Times* (December 9) stating:

Chat for up to 2 hours to Australia or New Zealand, and pay no more than £7.50. I fear that someone is now going to be paid to ascertain that a man living in the same home with anyone doing this, over Christmas no less, runs a high risk of losing his sanity.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP JOSEPH,
12 Eresby House,
Ruiland Gate, SW7 1BG.

By their fruits

From Mr Wilfred Jones

Sir, Forget the teachers. Bring in performance-related pay for the England cricket team.

Yours faithfully,
WILFRED JONES,
Conifers, Dock Lane,
Beaulieu, Hampshire SO42 7YU,
December 15.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE December 17: His Excellency Señor Rodolfo Gutiérrez was received in audience by The Queen and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador from Costa Rica to the Court of St James's. Señora Eugenia Lachner de Gutiérrez was also received by Her Majesty. Sir John Kerr (Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) was present. His Excellency Mr Jan Herman van Roijen and Mrs van Roijen were received in farewell audience by The Queen and took leave upon His Excellency relinquishing his appointment as Ambassador from The Netherlands to the Court of St James's. His Excellency Mr Sarah Kusum Wickremesinghe and Mrs Wickremesinghe were received in farewell audience by The Queen and took leave upon His Excellency relinquishing his appointment as High Commissioner for Sri Lanka. Mr Emanuele Cotter was received in audience by The Queen upon his appointment as British High Commissioner to St Lucia. Mrs Cotter was received by Her Majesty. His Excellency Dr Ngoni Chideya and Mrs Chideya were received in farewell audience by The Queen and took leave upon His Excellency relinquishing his appointment as High Commissioner for Zimbabwe. The Queen received Major-General Evelyn Webb-Carter, Major-General Commanding Household Division. The Queen received Lord Somerleyton on the relinquishment of his appointment as Master of the Horse. ST JAMES'S PALACE December 17: The Prince of Wales today visited South Wales, where he was received



The First World War medal, lost by Sidney Blackburn, right, while delivering papers in 1922

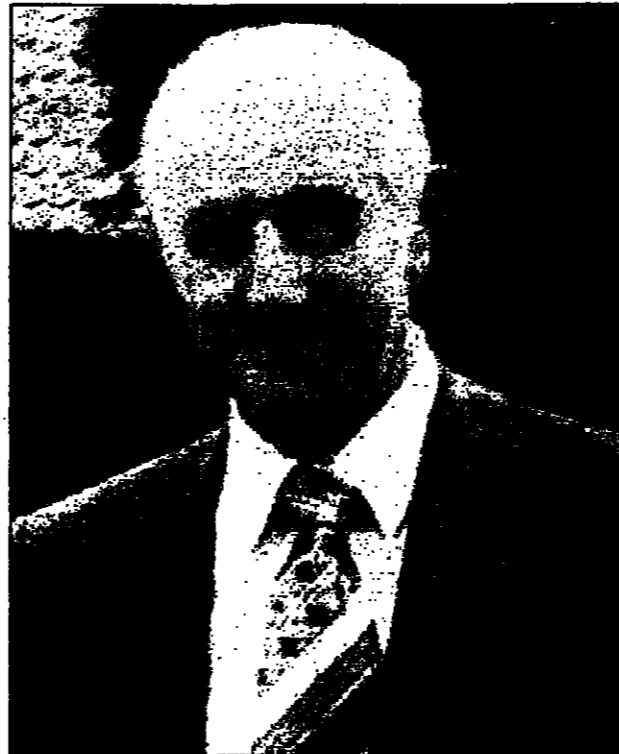
Missing medal turns up after 76 years

By PAUL WILKINSON

A SCHOOLBOYS' treasured memento of his dead father has been found in a potato field 76 years after he lost it while delivering papers. Sidney Blackburn was eight when his father Walter died in the trenches shortly before the end of the First World War. No pictures existed of his father so his mother gave him the silver British War Medal awarded posthumously to his father. Mr Blackburn cherished the campaign medal as his only tangible memory of his father. He took it with him everywhere.

But when he was 12 he returned home from delivering papers in his village of Wilberfoss, near York, to find it missing. In spite of retracing his steps several times, including the short cut he always took across a field on the outskirts of the village, he could not find his precious medal. Mr Blackburn died in 1996 aged 86 without ever knowing what had happened to the medal. But this week it was found in the same field he once used for his short cut by Tony Laverack, a metal detecting enthusiast in Wilberfoss. From the name engraved on the medal

Mr Laverack traced it to the Blackburn family and yesterday Sidney's widow Edna, 84, who now lives in nearby Pocklington, said: "When he lost the medal he was heartbroken and spent weeks looking for it. Even years later, whenever he was down, he would always say 'I wish I had found my Dad's medal'. The day he lost it he went back home and told his mother, and she said 'Don't worry, it will turn up one day', but I don't think she meant almost 80 years later. I nearly passed out when they told me it had been found. That medal meant the world to Sidney."



Forthcoming marriages

Mr N.C. Ash and Miss R.J. Lightfoot: The engagement is announced between Nicholas Charles, younger son of Mr and Mrs John Ash, of Bramley, Surrey, and Katherine Jane, elder daughter of Air Commodore and Mrs Robert Lightfoot, of Stoke-by-Nayland, Suffolk. Mr T.D. Banks and Miss R.E. Strickland: The engagement is announced between Timothy Douglas, elder son of Mr and Mrs Eddie Banks, of Petworth, West Sussex, and Ruth Ellen, elder daughter of the late Raymond (Ray) Strickland and of Mrs Strickland, of Putney, London. Mr T.H. Bell and Miss P.J.A. Whittemore: The engagement is announced between Thomas Hugh, youngest son of Lady Bell and the late Hugh Bell, of Ingleby Cross, North Yorkshire, and Penelope Jane Aird, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Reginald Whittemore, of Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire. Mr E.B.S. Bond and Miss V.L. McViville: The engagement is announced between Edward, son of the late Mr Brian Bond and of Mrs Robin Thorne, of Ovington House, near Alresford, Hampshire, and Virginia, daughter of Mr and Mrs Richard McViville, of Deep Well House, Great Chishill, Cambridgeshire. Mr T.C.S. Child and Miss P.E. Percy: The engagement is announced between Tim, elder son of Mr and Mrs John Child, of Wood Halling, Norfolk, and Pervaneh, elder daughter of the Hon Michael and Mrs Percy, of Appin, Argyll. Mr L.J. Cohen and Miss C. Dewborne: The engagement is announced between Lewis, son of Mr and Mrs Gerald Cohen, of Holport, Berkshire, and Candy, daughter of Mr and Mrs Alex Dawborne, of Bray, Berkshire. Mr P.R.S. Hancock and Miss B.C. Morrison: The engagement is announced between Phillip, son of Mr and Mrs William R. Hancock, of Guildford, Surrey, and Birgitta, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Ian Morrison, of Sunningdale, Berkshire. Mr D.L. Harkiss and Miss A.M.G. Kjellberg: The engagement is announced between Harry, eldest son of Mr and Mrs James Harkiss, of Venice, Italy, and Maria, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Claes Kjellberg, of Great Somerford, Wiltshire.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Charles Wesley, preacher and hymnwriter, Epworth, Lincolnshire, 1707; Joseph Grimaldi, clown, London, 1779; Hector Hugo Munro (Saki), writer, Akyab, Burma, 1870; Sir Joseph John Thomson, physicist, Nobel laureate 1906, Manchester, 1872; Paul Klee, painter, Bern, 1879; Betty Grable, actress, St Louis, Missouri, 1916; Prince William of Gloucester, Barm, Herefordshire, 1941.

DEATHS

Antonio Stradivari, violin maker, Cremona, Italy, 1737; Alexander Adam, educator, Edinburgh, 1800; Thomas Dunham Whittaker, topographer, Blackburn, 1831; John Alcock, aviator, killed in an air crash, Catterick, France, 1919; Robert Tryon (Cobby) Jones, golfer, Atlanta, Georgia, 1971. America officially abolished slavery with the ratification of the 13th Amendment, 1865.

Latest wills

Rear Admiral Sir Charles Roy Darrington, Director of Naval Education Service and Head of Instructor Branch of the Royal Navy, 1960-65, of Southsea, Hampshire, left estate valued at £233,346 net. Margaret Newton Chesnut, of Tormarton, South Gloucestershire, left estate valued at £109,621 net. Thomas Henry Faber, chartered surveyor, of Lower Chicksgrave, Salisbury, Wiltshire, left estate valued at £1,935,546 net. He left £5,000 to the Society of the Sacred Heart. Iolene Constance Foxley, of Edgborough, Birmingham, left estate valued at £1,377,652 net. She left £500 to both the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council for Research (Edgborough Branch) and the RNLI. Anthony Grace Gibbs, of London EC2, left estate valued at £1,447,191 net. She left shares in her residuary estate to the RNLI, Imperial Cancer Research Fund and Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund.

World Congress of Faiths

Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick and the Rev Dr Richard Boeke have been elected joint Vice-Chairpersons of the World Congress of Faiths. The have succeeded Rabbi Dr Norman Solomon, who has resigned after five years as vice-chairman.

Church in Wales

Bangor Diocese: The Rev Peter Pritchard, currently Rector of Llanfaethlu, Anglesey, is to be Cleric-in-Charge of Llanfihangel-y-ngheddol and Llanbedrog, Anglesey from January.

Dafydd Owen, recently Director of the McLeod Centre on Iona, has been appointed Youth Officer of the Bangor Diocese from February 1.

Dinner

Byron Society: Dr Fiona MacCarthy was the principal speaker at the Byron Society's Christmas dinner held last night at St Ermin's Hotel. Mr Geoffrey Bond, chairman, Mr Michael Foot and Mr John Murray also spoke.

University news

Cambridge: St John's College: David Michael Addis Stuart, BA Oxon; MSc, PhD, Princeton University, has been elected to a Fellowship and appointed Lecturer in Mathematics at St John's College, Cambridge, from January 1.

Memorial services

Sir Robert McCrindle: The Mayor of Brentwood attended a memorial service for Sir Robert McCrindle, former MP, held yesterday at the Church of St Thomas, Brentwood. Canon Bob White officiated. Mr Colin Sivell, Chief Executive of Brentwood Borough Council, read the lesson and Fiona McCrindle, granddaughter, read Footprints. Mr Geoffrey Jennings and Mr Alan McCrindle, son, paid tribute.

Mr Arthur Barrett: A service of thanksgiving for the life of Mr Arthur Barrett, a former Lord Mayor of Westminster, was held yesterday in the Lady Chapel of Westminster Abbey. The Dean of Westminster officiated, assisted by the Rev Gary Bradley, Vicar of St Saviour's, Paddington, who said prayers. Mr Ian Barrett, son, read the lesson and Group Captain Sir Gordon Pirie, read from The Confessions of St Augustine. Sir Godfrey Taylor gave an address.

The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Westminster and the Mayor and Mayoress of Hillingdon attended. Among others present were: Mrs Barrett (widow), Mrs Pauline Barrett, Mr John Barrett and Mrs Nicholas Barrett (grandsons), Mr Ian Gibson (step-son), and Mrs Michael Gibson (step-son and stepdaughter-in-law). Mrs Tina Goodman (step-daughter-in-law), Mr John Comerford, Mr and Mrs Vernon Brown, Miss Marais, Liam Gibson.

Army 6th Form Scholarships

Awards - Autumn 1998: The following have been awarded Army Scholarships for eventual entry to RMA Sandhurst: J F Adams, Eton College; L R Ash, Felton College; K A Baber, St Peter's School, York; J P C Barker, Halesbury; E S H Brunner, Brentwood School; J D Buckland, Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School, Bucks; J M J Cocks, Kings School, Kent; C Collie, The Mary Erskine School, Edinburgh; R Collingwood, Tonbridge School; A D B Crawley, Verulam School, St Albans; H O Dymon, Sir Roger Manwode's School, Kent; H J B Gates, Harrow School; A E Gilham, St Alban's School; Q J M Hicks, Marlborough College; A D Higgins, Wyckiffe College; L G Hoare, Winchester College; M N Holgate, Reed's School, Surrey; A Hughes, Kingston Grammar School; J Hursthouse, Taunton School; E J Lowther, Eton College; J A Markandale, Harrogate Grammar School; A L Newson, Royal Masonic School, Herts; J M H Paulin, Fulham Grammar School; R I Redwood, Truro School; S N Robinson, Aylesbury High School; I W G Ross, Lomond School, Helensburgh; D Ruck Keene, Eton College; N C Scorer, Sherborne School; B Shuttleworth, Winchester College; N M Sierens, Forest School, Chislehurst; R O H Smein, Wellington School; H C H Stewart, Strathallan School; W J T Sturt, Morrison's Academy, Perth; D J P Tubb, Reigate Grammar School; J R Thompson, Whitgift School; F O B Wells, Eton College; T J Weston, Clifton College; M Whitehouse, St Edmund's School, Canterbury; F Wingfield Digby, Eton College; E S J Young, Eton College.

Today's birthdays

Field Marshal Lord Bramall, KG, 75; Miss Frances Crook, director, Howard League for Penal Reform, 46; Mr David Crossland, group chairman and chief executive, Airtours, 52; Lieutenant-Commander I.E. Fraser, VC, 78; Mr Christopher Fry, dramatist, 91; Pamela Lady Harlech, 64; Professor M.J. Harrison, former Vice-Chancellor, Wolverhampton University, 57. Miss Rosemary Leach, actress, 83; Lord Lothofoe of Pontefract, 73; Lord Merlyn, 78; Mr J.C.S. Mott, civil engineer, 72; Mr Albert Pacey, former director-general, National Criminal Intelligence Service, 60; Miss Annette Page, former ballerina, 66; Dr Joyce Formyko, FBI, Roman historian, 80; Mr Keith Richardson, Rolling Stones' guitarist, 55; Lord Robens of Woldingham, 88. Miss Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, tennis player, 27; the Earl of Shrewsbury, 46; Mr Steven

Spiegelberg, film-maker, 51; Mr Joe Wade, trade unionist, 79; the Right Rev R.K. Williamson, former Bishop of Southwark, 66; Mr W.H. Yates, former senior partner, Knight Frank and Rutley, 63.

The Wine Standards Board of the Vintners' Company

Mrs Kate Timms, Deputy Secretary, Agricultural Crops & Commodities Directorate and the Master of the Vintners' Company were the principal guests at Vintners' Hall when the Board celebrated the 25th Anniversary of its formation. All Members of the Board, the Chief Executive, the Central Office Staff and the Inspectorate were present. The Chairman, Mr Peter Purton, presided.

Legal appointment

Mr Nicholas John Coleman has been appointed to be a Circuit Judge on the South Eastern Circuit.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880 PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982 FAX: 0171 481 9313

Those those who found the Lord... BIRTHS: ALDER - On 18th November... BALFOUR - On December 11th... BARBER - On December 11th... BUTCHER - On December 14th... CONNOLLY - On Thursday... DYAMAKO - On December 13th... DANIEL - On 12th December... DUNLOP - On December 16th... FOX - On December 3rd... HILL - On December 10th...

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GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES: HUNTER-JONES-ROBERTS - On 18th December... DEATHS: MITCHELL - Thomas Patrick... BRUCE - James Alexander... FELLOWS - David John... GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES: HUNTER-JONES-ROBERTS - On 18th December... DEATHS: MITCHELL - Thomas Patrick... BRUCE - James Alexander... FELLOWS - David John...

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becoming marriages

OBITUARIES

ADMIRAL SIR RICHARD THOMAS

Admiral Sir Richard Thomas, KCB, KCVO, OBE, United Kingdom Military Representative to Nato, 1989-92, and Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, 1992-95, died of complications after a stroke on December 13 aged 66. He was born on March 22, 1932.



Thomas in 1987: analytical mind, robust and fearless Cold War warrior

Richard Thomas's final two appointments in the higher ranks of the naval service made him an active participant in the extraordinary transition that marked the end of the Cold War and set in train the consequent redefinition of the Nato Alliance. Between 1987 and 1989 he was - as a vice-admiral - the deputy to the Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic (SACLANT), Nato's major naval commander based at Norfolk, Virginia, in the United States. Always allocated to a British naval officer, this is a challenging post, for SACLANT himself keeps more than half an eye on his national role as C-in-C US Atlantic Fleet, leaving his deputy to develop the issues of transatlantic cohesion and strategic coherence of purpose among the other Nato maritime nations. An era of diminishing defence resources and increasing political uncertainty made many calls upon Thomas's forthright personality and communication skills. Promoted to full admiral in 1989, three months before the fall of the Berlin Wall, he was appointed as the United Kingdom's representative on Nato's highest military policy-making body, the Military Committee, based in Brussels. Operating under instructions from London but always balancing national and alliance interests, Thomas was admired among his colleagues for his robust and fearless advocacy of the military point of view, while surrounded by a climate of opinion promoted by North Atlantic Council diplomats who, in their hopes for a new dawn, foresaw the withering of Nato's military purpose and the strengthening of the political. Subsequent events in the Balkans vindicated Thomas's sanguine realism. Educated at Downside and entering the Royal Navy in 1951, Thomas made his first seagoing tour in the carrier Illustrious and the cruiser Gambia. As Flag Lieutenant to the C-in-C East Indies Station in 1956, he had his first taste of the world of protocol and earned praise for his efficiency and integrity. As navigator of the frigate

Eastbourne, a sharp edge to his personality was noted - "sometimes inclined to intolerance" - but subsequently, while in the destroyer Crossbow, he earned a rare accolade as "a most able and splendid officer with clear prospects for the future". He commanded the landing ship Buttress in the Mediterranean and the minesweeper Wolverton as a lieutenant, followed in 1962 by a tour in the Royal Yacht Britannia. This record, including an outstanding performance as the second-in-command of the frigate Torquay, earned him an early promotion to commander in 1966 and the captaincy of the frigate Trowbridge. Except for staff courses, he had been at sea almost

continuously since 1950. He was now to spend the next six years ashore, retaining the rank of commander for the entire period - worryingly for him. At home, while running the appointment of the Navy's 13,000 seaman ratings, his efficiency and imaginative outlook resulted in several useful innovations. After a tour on the staff of the Flag Officer First Flotilla, he was yet again appointed to an admiral's staff as Operations Officer, on this occasion the Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland. This organisation was heavily involved during 1972 in what became known as the Second Cod War, a dispute between the United Kingdom and Iceland about fishing

rights. Icelandic fishery protection vessels devised a way of cutting the nets of British trawlers; measures physically to counter this by the manoeuvring of warships resulted in several expensive collisions and much political tension between what were, after all, two Nato allies. In his dealings with this crisis as well as the bread-and-butter of Nato's maritime deterrence in far northern waters, Thomas was described as unflappable, meticulous and far-sighted. For his contribution he was appointed OBE. Finally promoted to captain at the last available opportunity, Thomas served in the plans division of the Admiralty as the naval staff officer concerned with the Polar

submarine force. He then commanded the assault ship Fearless, attended the Royal College of Defence Studies in 1979 and, in recognition of his talent with people, was placed in charge of the appointment and career management of all seaman officers. This theme was continued in his first post as rear-admiral - as Naval Secretary responsible for the policy and promotions of the entire officer corps. As Flag Officer First Flotilla, he returned to sea, where a contemporary recalls Thomas's insistence that his staff should be lean and small enough to operate continuously from sea, however small the flagship. He was also noted for his sense of humour and his ability to inform and inspire the many ships' companies that were paraded to hear him speak. He was appointed KCB in 1987. On leaving the Navy in 1991, he was appointed Gentleman Usher to the Black Rod in the House of Lords. Here his duties extended well beyond the popular image seen on television at each Opening of Parliament: Black Rod has some eighty people reporting to him and is responsible for the security, administration, works and accommodation of the House of Lords, including the supervision of projects running to several millions of pounds. His sense of order and discipline was illustrated by his concern that, at one Opening of Parliament, the clothes sense of the press photographers was particularly sloppy; henceforward the attendance of photographers was to depend on their being attired in morning dress. His stroke in July 1993 left him with some physical disabilities, but his mind was as clear as ever and he continued to be a forceful and effective Black Rod until 1995, when he was appointed KCVO. During his time with the House of Lords, he was also, as a Roman Catholic, accorded the rare honour of a papal knighthood in the Order of Pope Pius IX. In retirement he was actively engaged in a number of charities: he was a member of the committee of the Royal Humane Society and a governor of the English Speaking Union. In addition to the patronage of several Hampshire organisations, he was a council member of the Stroke Association and was active both in promoting rehabilitation policies as well as in visiting and encouraging other stroke victims. He is survived by his wife Paddy, whom he married in 1959, by two of their four sons and by their four daughters.

ILSE NOACH



Noach followed the psychological development of her "War Babies" for many years

Ilse Noach, psychoanalyst, died on December 3 aged 90. She was born in Vienna in 1908. ILSE NOACH worked with Anna Freud, studying the development of children at a residential nursery. In later years - right through to her eighties - she followed these children and assessed their progress through life, as well as running her own psychoanalytical practice and training others. Ilse Hellman Noach was brought up in the cultural epicentre of Viennese society. Her parents, Paul and Irene Hellman, were patrons of the arts. Her father was one of the founders of the Salzburg Festival, and his close friends included Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal. The couple nurtured such talents as the violinist Adolf Busch and the pianist Rudolf Serkin, as well as financing their brother-in-law Fritz Werndorfer's Wiener Werkstätte design project. Ilse's uncle, Joseph Redlich, was a leading figure in the development of the psychoanalytic world. It was unusually, Ilse was educated at a Roman Catholic boys' school. Her childhood (and, indeed, lifelong) friends included Sir Ernst Gombrich and Konrad Lorenz. Rebelling against her family, she went to study child psychology in France. This was followed by a

doctorate in psychology at Vienna University, after which she worked for the pioneer child psychologist Charlotte Buhler. The rise of the Third Reich resulted in Buhler's moving to England with several of her staff, including Ilse Hellman. When war was declared, Ilse was employed by the Home Office, organising the evacuation of children from London. Then she started working with Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham at their residential nursery, where revolutionary methods of child-care were being developed. Instead of an institutional regime, the children were cared for in small groups, receiving much individual attention and encouragement and being allowed choice in such matters as food and clothes. Through the encouragement of their talents, several of them later achieved professional success in fields far beyond their parents' horizons. Careful study was made of the children's psychological development, and this continued for many decades, resulting in the longest-ever follow-up study, which was described in Noach's book *From War Babies to Grandmothers*, published in 1988 to mark her 80th birthday. Meanwhile, she started training as a psychoanalyst.

Her analyst was Dorothy Burlingham who had herself been analysed by Sigmund Freud. After the war Ilse discovered that her mother and brother had perished in concentration camps, her father having died of natural causes in Vienna just after the Anschluss. She took her brother's son under her wing, and he later became a successful journalist in the Netherlands. Ilse married the Dutch historian Arnold Noach, who had come to London to recover from a war spent evading the Nazis in The Netherlands. She continued working closely with Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham at the Hampstead Clinic, as well as developing her own psychoanalytical practice and training future Freudian psychoanalysts. She excelled at helping her many patients to develop their creative talents and achieve the success to which they aspired but so often feared. Her liveliness, energy and sense of humour all contributed to her own eminence in the psychoanalytic world. It was with great regret that she retired at the age of 84; she continued to enjoy talking about her work and to revel in the friendship and achievements of her "War Babies" until the very end of her life. She is survived by her daughter.

PROFESSOR SIDNEY POLLARD

Professor Sidney Pollard, economic and social historian, died on November 22 aged 73. He was born on April 21, 1925.

INTELLECTUAL life in 20th-century Britain was greatly enriched by the migration from the Greater Germany of the 1930s. Sidney Pollard was a Jewish child refugee from Central Europe, and his contri-

bution to scholarship can be traced from Vienna, the second of two sons. His father, Moses Pollak, a commercial traveller, had migrated from Galicia to Vienna before the First World War. His mother, Leontine (née Katz), had followed a similar path. Pollard received his early education at a Jewish private school in Vienna, where he excelled in

mathematics and became an accomplished violinist. With the worsening situation for Jews in Austria, his parents secured a place for him on one of the Kindertransporte in December 1938. Pollard left for England and never saw his parents again. They died in the Holocaust. After his arrival at Harwich, Pollard spent an initial period in reception camps in

East Anglia, before moving in the spring of 1939 to Whittingehame where he and other refugee children worked on the estate farms of the Balfour family. In addition, Pollard received instruction in the printing trade. These refugee children were destined eventually for a kibbutz in Palestine. However, in 1941 the money for Whittingehame ran out and Pollard transferred to

Worcestershire to a similar scheme. From there, and in the process of losing his Zionism, he moved to Cambridge and secured work at Ridgeon's, a local firm of market gardeners. He hated the outdoor life, for which his Viennese background had not prepared him, and this distaste strengthened his resolve to educate himself. Some assistance came from Greta Burkill, who helped many other refugees, and financial support for his correspondence courses came from relative John Katz. On the basis of his performance in the Intermediate exam for the External BSc (Econ) degree of London University, the London School of Economics offered him a place. However, he was unable to take up that offer until 1947. In 1943 he volunteered for military service and, in the process, Siegfried Pollak became Sidney Pollard. He served with the Reconnaissance Corps in Belgium and Germany before his demobilisation in 1947. From that point his career advanced rapidly. He took a first at the LSE in 1948 and obtained a scholarship for doctoral research, which he



Pollard: described Britain's relative economic decline

completed in 1950. In the same year he became a research fellow at Sheffield University, where he was to become the first Professor of Economic History in 1963. He resigned in 1980 and moved to Bielefeld University in Germany. He retired in 1990 and spent his

later years as honorary senior research fellow in the history department at Sheffield. A founder member of the Society for the Study of Labour History, he first published *The Development of the British Economy* (1962) and *The Genesis of Modern Manage-*

ment (1965). From the late 1960s he wrote incisively and provocatively on the relative economic decline of Britain, in *The Waning of the British Economy* (1982) and in *Britain's Prime and Britain's Decline* (1989). The other focus of his research was European industrialisation, explored in *Peaceful Conquest* (1981) and *Marginal Europe* (1997). From the mid-1960s he held visiting university appointments in America, Israel and Australia. He was elected a corresponding Fellow of the British Academy in 1988. A *Festschrift* was presented to him in 1991, and he received an honorary doctorate from Sheffield University in 1992. Pollard's was not an effortless ride to academic eminence, but the barriers in his way seemed to spur him on. He took consolation in the *Times* crossword, in music (particularly Beethoven) and in travel. His first marriage, to Eileen Andrews, ended in divorce, but in 1982 he married Helen Trippett, and so gained a large extended family which gave him much pleasure and support. He is survived by his wife and by two sons and a daughter of his first marriage.

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'AFFRONTS' TO SCOTLAND, The petitioners say that they and many other Scotsmen view with apprehension the manner in which certain departments of the Government have seen fit to disregard the provisions of the Treaty of Union of 1707...

ON THIS DAY, December 18, 1935, A petition about Scotland's treaty rights in the British Union was addressed to the King, through the Secretary of State, on behalf of the London and Glasgow branches of the St Andrew Society...

NEWS

RAF Tornados join Iraq attack

British Tornados joined the bombing raids on Iraq in a second day of attacks which continued to cause devastating damage to Saddam Hussein's most important military facilities.

Law lords overturn Pinochet ruling

General Augusto Pinochet was given a fresh opportunity to win his freedom after five law lords to throw out their colleagues' ruling which had denied him sovereign immunity.

Lawson scrutiny

Dominic Lawson faces protracted parliamentary scrutiny after being named in the Commons as an MI6 agent.

Union attack

Trade unions launched a bitter attack on the Government's revised plans for union recognition.

Schools setback

The Government's educational standards crusade suffered a double setback when national tests showed unwelcome results for boys' performance.

Bombing appeal

A science graduate jailed for 25 years for making IRA bombs, including the Hyde Park device that killed four soldiers.

Woman pioneer

The BBC appointed a woman as controller of one of its television channels for the first time.

Santer threat

The European Parliament struck a rare blow against alleged incompetence and fraud in the European Commission.

Extremist ban

Animal rights extremists and religious cults face bans under proposals to strengthen anti-terrorist laws.

Rescue bid

British troops in Macedonia began preparing an armoured infantry base outside the capital, Skopje.

Smear trials

A new method of making slides for cervical smears, which will eliminate the hit-and-miss nature of current testing.

Chinese demo

There were unusual demonstrations outside a Chinese court as 200 people gathered to show their support for a Chinese dissident.

Former nun tells of heartbreak

A former nun described how she lost her virginity when a Catholic priest broke his vow of celibacy to have sex with her during a passionate year-long love affair.



Windows in the Holy Family Church, Dunblane, commemorating the victims of the gun attack are called "Lead", "Kindly" and "Light"

BUSINESS

Retail boost: A surprise leap in retail sales followed by a modest recovery in manufacturing exports raised hopes that the UK could avoid a prolonged recession.

Asda move: Asda, the supermarket group, is to respond to increasingly tough trading conditions by radically cutting its number of gimmicky promotional offers.

RPI plea: The Treasury Select Committee has called for control over the scope and definition of the Retail Prices Index to be taken away from the Chancellor.

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 54.3 to 5685.2. The pound fell 22 cents to \$1.6738 and 73 pence to DM2.7864.

SPORT

Football: David Platt was welcomed by Sampdoria supporters, but not by Italian coaches when he took up his new position as manager of Sampdoria.

Cricket: Courtney Walsh, one of the most successful overseas players ever to play in the English county game, has been released by Gloucestershire.

Rugby union: English clubs have been accused of potentially turning their backs on around £12million if they refuse to play in next season's European Cup.

Snooker: Stephen Hendry's run of poor form continued when he was beaten 5-4 by Tony Drago in the quarter-finals of the Irish Open in Dublin.

Year in the arts

"Whole casts of important people strutted and fretted their hour upon the stage" - Richard Morrison on a turbulent 12 months.

Pop 1: Caitlin Moran on the day Jane "The Cruise" McDonald's ship came in: plus five jazz gigs, and new pop and jazz albums reviewed.

Pop 2: David Sinclair looks back at the hits and misses of 1998, when the only thing that was certain was that pop could take nothing for granted.

Gosh, Snowy: If radio audiences of mature years are wondering what Dick Barton, special agent, has been doing lately, he's back in a jolly new musical.

Jane Shilling

So how you made it yet - the big decision? I don't mean the big shall-we-have-goose-or-turkey decision? I mean what-to-wear-on-Christmas-Day.

Joe Joseph: Men! Be considerate: don't keep the joys of seasonal shopping all to yourself; let your wife do it all.

Power duo: Christiane Amanpour is CNN's man in Baghdad and her husband, James Rubin is the chief spokesman at the State Department.

Talk it up: Washington insiders had little to tillate the taste buds. Then Bill Clinton arrived and every commentator is in demand.

Ted's travels: How does a politician go about plugging his long autobiography? Ted Heath hit the road running.

Wrong note: Why are children increasingly ignorant of Christmas carols?

By attacking Iraq as House members gathered in the capital to consider his impeachment, Mr. Clinton could not avoid the impression that he is blurring the boundaries that must separate America's foreign conduct from its domestic turbulence.

Admiral Sir Richard Thomas: Use Noach, psychoanalyst; Professor Sidney Pollard, economic historian.

Military action against Iraq: traffic planning in Oxford; blight of Christmas e-mails; sinking of HMS Hood; pop music charts: Heaven and Hell.

Simon Jenkins: Saddam is not such a big threat to his region or to Britain to merit this campaign. He is best undermined by contact, trade, wealth, open borders and fostered dissent.

Mary Ann Sieghart: Emotional intelligence is the ability to get on with other people, and of course to know oneself.

Philip Howard: Both ancient and modern versions of the soundbite can contain wit and wisdom.

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TOMORROW IN THE TIMES ON SATURDAY COOL YULE FESTIVE TONE Dan Blair goes a-wassailing



THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,978

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-28 indicating starting points for words.

- ACROSS: 1 Excitement not available for a start (4-3). 5 Basil, say, having row with bishop (7). 9 Half-hearted conversion in Caledonia (9). 10 Ring a little shop girl heard (5). 11 Gratuitous flattery (13). 13 Old king's order - for his salad days? (8). 15 Chap, say, has a wine cellar (6). 17 Gold transaction leading to Fever's trial (6). 19 Irregular income cut by small firm being frugal (8). 22 What bad sailors want for a passage over the Line (5,8). 25 Peripheral route is liable to change (5).

TEST TUBE POSITIVE U R R E A O C E LEADING QUESTION IT G U D E F O PATTERN ICHDIEN S E R E I L S IRISHMAN PALMA G E O C A W INDIA DWELLING N D E E D K RECOVER FRISSON U A E A E T L O MAJORITIVITY B R O U G H T M O S E I I D T YANKEE TRUMPETY

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HOURS OF DARKNESS. Sun rises: 8:02 am. Sun sets: 3:52 pm. Moon sets: 7:05 am.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING. Recycled paper made up 41% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the last half of 1997.

FORECAST

General: East Anglia and southeast England will start dry and bright, but it will be breezy and cloud will increase, bringing outbreaks of rain this afternoon.

Table with columns: Sun, Rain, Max, Min. Lists weather conditions for various UK locations like Aberdeen, Anglessey, Ayr, etc.

Table with columns: Sun, Rain, Max, Min. Lists weather conditions for various European cities like Accio, Alrotri, Alrotri, etc.

WORLD CITY WEATHER

Table with columns: City, Forecast. Lists weather for 153 destinations worldwide.

Table with columns: City, Sun, Rain, Max, Min. Lists weather for various European cities.

Table with columns: City, Sun, Rain, Max, Min. Lists weather for various European cities.

WORLD WEATHER

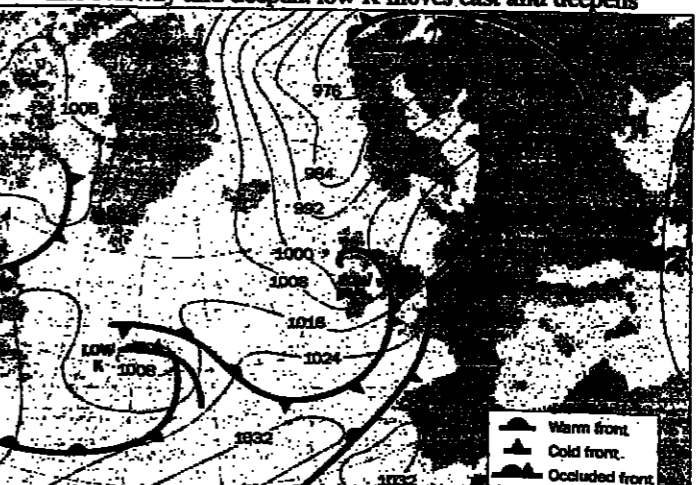


Table with columns: City, Sun, Rain, Max, Min. Lists weather for various global cities.

Large vertical advertisement on the right side of the page, partially obscured and containing text like 'Traders', 'Retail', 'Asda to', 'gimmick', 'as sales', 'low dow', 'mens', 'to run', 'national', 'wings', 'Fra'.

THE TIMES

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Wheels fall off Mother Courage's oil trolley

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Nicole Kidman and other headliners of the year

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MEDIA

Snorted: how James Brown ditched his Loaded past

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TELEVISION AND RADIO

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY DECEMBER 18 1998

Traders and manufacturers ease gloom with signs of resilience

Retail sales rise surprises City

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

A SURPRISE leap in retail sales and a modest recovery in manufacturing exports has raised hopes that Britain can avoid a prolonged recession.

Coming after figures on Wednesday showing that the economy is still generating jobs, the City was more confident that Britain, with the aid of lower interest rates and a softer pound, was in better shape to withstand the global economic downturn.

The stock market was de-

lighted, rallying after an intensely nervous opening as traders attempted to digest the ramifications of the bombing of Iraq. At the end of the session, the FTSE 100 index of leading shares stood 54.8 points higher at 5,685.2, buoyed partly by rallying oil and retail stocks.

Retail sales confounded City expectations — based largely on some extremely depressed surveys in recent weeks — to increase by 0.8 per cent in November compared with October, according to the Office for National Statistics. The consensus of market forecasts had

been for a further fall of 0.3 per cent to follow very weak showings in the past few months. November's rise was the first since August.

The Confederation of British Industry's latest industrial trends survey for December offered an even more recent snapshot of the economy and suggested that manufacturing, while still very fragile, had recovered a little buoyancy courtesy of a lower pound and sharp falls in interest rates.

The CBI said that demand remained weak with 38 per cent more companies report-

ing below normal order books than those reporting above normal books. However, this was an improvement on the 47 per cent figure in November and was the first break in an inexorable downward slide since February.

Sudhir Junankar, the CBI's associate director of economic analysis, said: "There are some signs of a slight easing of concerns over the last month but these small improvements should not be overstated."

The CBI called on the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee to cut base rates

again in the new year, noting the absence of inflationary pressures in the economy.

The breakdown of yesterday's retail sales figures suggested that retailers have been able to "buy" volume by discounting. The retail sales deflator — a key prices measure — was 0.9 per cent against a year ago, down from the 1.5 per cent figure recorded in the year to March.

Adam Law, economist with Barclays Capital, put the case for further monetary easing more strongly. He said: "Any-one who suggests these num-

bers mean that the MPC doesn't have to cut rates again is barking mad."

However, others in the City said that this week's evidence would give the MPC pause for thought. Ken Watret, economist with Banque Paribas, said that the figures point to a deceleration in the pace of rate curbing with January less likely now to yield another cut in base rates.

That view received support from sterling interest rate futures markets which adjusted downwards their expectations for interest rate cuts.

However, Mr Watret remained undeterred from his forecast of 5 per cent base rates by the end of next year.

The ONS gave warning yesterday that November's bounce in retail sales probably gave an exaggerated view of the high street's resilience, noting that the recovery came against a very weak performance in October.

It noted that sales in the three months to November were up only 0.4 per cent from the previous three months and were 2.5 per cent up on the same period a year ago.

Asda to cut gimmicks as sales slow down

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM, RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

ASDA, the supermarket group, is to respond to increasingly tough trading conditions by cutting its gimmicky promotional offers in order to focus on cutting prices.

The company, which yesterday reported a sharp slowdown in sales growth over the past year, said the recent emphasis on the "buy one, get one free" style of promotion by it and its competitors had spoilt customers' perception of Asda's pricing.

"Consumers are very confused about what is and isn't good value," said Allan Leighton, chief executive. "It obscures our real value position."

"What we're trying to do is turn down the promotional noise and put in cheaper prices. We are going to significantly reduce our promotions."

Asda, which along with Tes-

co, Sainsbury's and Safeway is the subject of an Office of Fair Trading investigation into possible profiteering, claims to have brought down its food prices by about 2 per cent in the past few months.

The company, which is chaired by Archie Norman, the Tory MP, also revealed yesterday that it is buying five large Co-op stores, for about £65 million.

Pre-tax profit in the six months to November 14 was up 4.1 per cent to £197.8 million on like-for-like sales growth of 3 per cent, down from 8.2 per cent in the previous financial year. Fully diluted earnings per share rose from 4.79p to 4.9p and the company is paying an interim dividend of 0.55p (0.91p).

The company reported a strong performance from its George clothing brand, which saw like-for-like sales rise 10 per cent. Sales of fresh meat, produce and takeaway meals continued to rise strongly.

It painted an otherwise gloomy picture, however, saying that over the past six months the industry "has been characterised by low and falling inflation, continued addition of new space and converging levels of growth".

It said that the softening in consumer spending had spread to the South and that with all companies continuing to open new stores, competition would remain fierce.

The company is also launching a three-year programme designed to improve its relations with Britain's farmers. It will include a £4 million investment in a consumer advertising campaign to promote British meat and produce and a pledge that Asda will choose British meat, produce and dairy products whenever it can in preference to overseas suppliers.

Commentary, page 29



Weighing up the options: Allan Leighton, chief executive, left, and Archie Norman, chairman of Asda, which has bought five Co-op stores for £65 million

MPs move to curb Chancellor on RPI

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE Treasury Select Committee has called for control over the scope and definition of the retail prices index (RPI) to be taken away from the Chancellor to prevent any political interference with what has become the key target economic indicator.

In a report published yesterday on the work of the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the committee of MPs said it had been told by the Treasury that the Chancellor intended to retain control over the RPI.

The MPs, however, said that was unacceptable. The report stated: "This provision is one of the few remaining oppor-

tunities for real or perceived interference in figures produced by the ONS, as distinct from the rest of the Government Statistical Service."

The committee said that such issues were exactly what the Government's Green Paper on the statistical service had sought to tackle. It added: "Since the Treasury was unable to provide the explanation of the benefits of the present arrangements which we sought, we see no justification for its continuance."

On the thorny issue of the ONS's average earnings data, suspended at the beginning of last month amid controversy over dramatic revisions, the committee urged that the current independent review into the figures should be published. It said that the very announcement of the review had given the impression that the ONS had failed and that it was an attempt to deflect criticism from the Bank of England and the Treasury for putting too much reliance on one set of data in determining monetary policy. Rises in earnings, subsequently revised downwards, were a key reason for the controversial rise in base rates last June.

Commentary, page 29

Siemens to run National Savings

By JASON NISSÉ

AS MANY as 2,000 staff at National Savings are expected to lose their jobs after the £1 billion deal struck yesterday in which Siemens, the German electronics group, will take over the administration of the government organisation.

Patricia Hewitt, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, announced the 15-year deal which follows the bid battle between Siemens and EDS, the US systems company. The move is expected to save the Government more than £500 million.

Siemens will take charge of all the back office functions at National Savings from April 1, leaving a staff of 120 in its London head office.

About 3,800 staff in Blackpool, Durham and Glasgow will transfer to Siemens. It is expected to cut staff by at least half as part of a computerisation and cost-saving programme, with at least one of these centres expected to close.

Staff have known that job losses were on the cards for quite some time. Two years ago, the organisation commissioned a report that said 1,500 jobs would have to go.

Fraser lords it in new oil job

By CARL MORTISHED

LORD Fraser of Carmyllie has taken little time in moving from the snakepit of Westminster downstream to the oil traders' pit next to the Tower of London.

Deputy leader of the Conservatives in the House of Lords until his high-profile resignation from the post earlier this month, Lord Fraser was yesterday appointed chairman of the International Petroleum Exchange (IPE).

Lord Fraser, a life peer, quit his post in the Upper House after the sacking of Lord Cran-

borne as Opposition leader in the Lords by William Hague. Lord Fraser had supported his chief in a plot hatched in talks with Tony Blair to keep 91 hereditary peers in place as an interim measure after abolition of the general right of hereditary peers to sit in the Lords.

Lord Fraser was outspoken in criticism of Mr Hague, saying he was disgusted by the way Lord Cranborne was treated.

The 53-year-old son of a Church of Scotland minister is now taking the chair in another organisation facing turmoil. The IPE is talking with its US rival, the New York Mercan-

tile Exchange (NYMEX) about a possible merger that is likely to bring to the fore the issue of screen trading versus open outcry trading.

The IPE and the NYMEX are under pressure from their members to create a unified market to trade their respective oil futures contracts, Brent and West Texas Intermediate. The two exchanges are already in a strategic alliance aimed at creating a common platform for 24-hour electronic trading in oil futures.

Lord Fraser is already a lay member of the IPE board and is also on the board of the Lon-

don Metal Exchange. His first job as chairman of IPE will be to amend a January board meeting at which the merger will be top of the agenda.

The peer is no stranger to oil markets. As Minister for Energy from 1996 to 1997, he was involved in negotiating the Frigg gas pipeline treaty with Norway. He was also Minister of State at the DTI, responsible for export promotion, and served as a Scottish Office Minister. He is a QC and was an MP from 1979 until 1987.

Lord Fraser succeeds Richard Reinert, of Refco Overseas, who retires in January.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	5685.2	(+54.8)
Yield	2.84%	
FTSE All Share	2585.21	(+20.67)
Nikkei	14126.99	(+30.39)
Dow Jones	8878.141	(+87.54)*
S&P Composite	1175.81	(+13.67)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	4.75%	(5%)
Long bond	103%	(103%)
Life long gilt	5.02%	(5.00%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth interbank	6%	(6.4%)
Life long gilt	118.60	(118.44)

STERLING

New York	1.5753	(1.6682)
London	1.6724	(1.6765)
DM	2.7853	(2.7950)
FF	9.3424	(9.3857)
SFR	2.2569	(2.2549)
Yen	194.11	(194.10)
£ index	100.4	(100.8)

US DOLLAR

London	1.6682	(1.6765)
DM	5.5872	(5.6163)
SFR	1.3487	(1.3630)
Yen	116.33	(116.95)
£ index	104.8	(104.7)

Tokyo close Yen 116.10

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Mar)	\$11.10	(Lund)
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GOLD

London close	\$281.85	(\$282.75)
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* denotes midday trading prices

Oil price falls as exports continue

OIL prices collapsed yesterday as evidence emerged that Iraqi oil exports were continuing at the same time as American missiles rained on Baghdad (Carl Mortished writes).

The January Brent crude contract plunged by a dollar to \$10.35 a barrel, cancelling all the gains made on Wednesday when dealers scrambled to buy oil contracts in anticipation that supplies would be cut.

Hopes were also dashed that Opec countries would curb output after a meeting of oil ministers in Mexico yesterday failed to produce a pledge for action. Iraq continues to pump 1.8 million barrels per day under a UN sponsored oil for food programme.

Oil unscathed, page 31

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Public interest members to join FSA's discipline panel

By RICHARD MILES

COMPANIES accused of market abuse or other regulatory breaches will be judged and disciplined by a committee of industry practitioners and public interest members, under proposals made yesterday by the Financial Services Authority, the new City regulator.

The FSA also proposes to adopt the standards of Crown prosecutors when deciding whether to take a case to the criminal courts rather than to seek a civil remedy. This will include assessing what is in the public interest.

At the publication of the FSA's consultative paper on enforcement yesterday, Phillip Thorpe, managing director and head of enforcement, sought to allay City fears by saying that the disciplinary process would be low-cost, quick in resolution and, above all, fair.

He said: "There is no value to consumers in having long, drawn-out proceedings. The enforcement process must be quick and cheap to run."

Mr Thorpe said that he believed that the proposals complied fully with European provisions on human rights.

The proposals call for alleged miscreants to be judged by people separate from the investigation. To this end, they will appear before an enforcement committee chaired by a professional individual who would be accompanied by practitioner and public interest representatives.

It has not yet been decided whether the representatives would vote on disciplinary action, or merely advise the committee's chairman, who will be appointed, and probably financially remunerated, by the FSA's board.

The finance industry has until February 28 to make its views known.

Dan Waters, director of enforcement, said that the enforcement process would work because it acted as a deterrent and ensured that misconduct would not be profitable.

In addition, it would increase confidence in the regulatory regime and alert the public to the types of misconduct in the market.

Seeking to give the lie to claims that the FSA's powers are unprecedented — detractors question its capabilities to obtain prison sentences of up to seven years and the imposi-

tion of unlimited fines — Mr Waters cited the Securities and Exchange Commission in the US.

Proposals dealing with the disciplining of individuals will be set out later, but Mr Waters said that the discipline of a firm represented "a collective failure of senior management".

However, the FSA would adhere to "a particularised approach" to the regulation of individuals. "There would be no special regime for financial fraudsters, no lighter regime for white-collar criminals," he said.

HOW DOES ARDBEG TASTE TO REGIS LEMAÎTRE?



Regis Lemaître is Bars Manager of the Old Course Hotel, St. Andrews.

A lot of

(pass)

+
a measure of

(balance)

+
a suspicion of

(orange)

+
a degree of

(complexity)

+
with lashings of

(islay)

(Islay)

With a seventeen year old Islay single malt as subtle and as complex as Ardbeg everyone finds different elements that particularly appeal in its perfectly balanced flavour.

Connoisseurs are agreed, however, that Ardbeg is one of the world's truly great malts.

Find out for yourself what Ardbeg tastes like to you by buying a bottle at Oddbins and other discerning specialists.



OECD in call for ECB to publish minutes

By JANET BUSH ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE European Central Bank should publish minutes of its meetings to make it accountable for its decisions, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

In the final version of its *Economic Outlook* published yesterday, the OECD expressed concern that the ECB, which from January 1 controls the interest rates of the euro II, may be subject to political pressure from national governments and regional interests.

The ECB has already said that it does not intend to publish its minutes, arguing that national board members would find it harder to take a euro-wide view rather than a national one and more difficult to change their minds during policy debates.

The OECD acknowledged that it is hard to evaluate how transparent the ECB should be, given that it is a new institution that will experience unusually intense scrutiny from the financial markets. However, it said that, even if the ECB could not be persuaded to publish full minutes, it should at least publish "a summary of meetings to explain the rationale of actions when they have been taken".

The OECD also said that it was even more concerned about the renewed risk of a fall in world stock markets than it was when it published its preliminary report.



Piers Corbyn, managing director of Weather Action, the supplier of forecasts for climate-sensitive industries, yesterday reported quadrupled interim losses of £245,000, but said a marketing blitz should bear fruit next financial year. The AIM-listed shares held at 55½p

German economy to suffer sharper slowdown

By SIGRID AUFTSRBECK

THE German economy has lost momentum and faces a much sharper slowdown than expected.

The forecast for 1999 from Ifo, the leading German economic institute, published yesterday, predicts GDP growth of 1.7 per cent for the coming year, compared with growth for 1998 expected to come in at an estimated 2.9 per cent.

The Ifo researchers have performed a rapid volte-face. In October, a forecast made jointly with Germany's five other top economic institutes predicted a slowdown but one that would still allow 2 per cent growth in 1999.

The main reason for the slowdown is a fall in foreign demand. The German export boom has come to an abrupt halt because of the crises in Asia, Russia and Latin America, while domestic demand has not grown fast enough to compensate. In addition, industry order books are reported to be slimmer and business confidence is low according to Ifo.

The institute, meanwhile, was sceptical of the jobs pledges made by Oskar Lafontaine, the German Finance Minister. Demographic changes, it said, should bring unemployment down to 3.9 million by the end of 1999, but it added: "The decline in unemployment would need to gain pace significantly, if Oskar Lafontaine is to fulfil his promise to bring the number of unemployed below three million by 2002."

Oftel to monitor emergency calls handled by CWC

By CHRIS AYRES

EMERGENCY telephone calls that are answered by Cable & Wireless Communications operators are to be monitored weekly by Britain's telephone regulator after concern over the company's ability to trace calls.

Oftel yesterday admitted that it had received a complaint in July that emergency services had been sent to wrong addresses by CWC's emergency operators. Oftel said the company had since managed temporarily to solve the problem.

David Edmonds, director-general of Oftel, said: "It is vital that this information [about addresses] is correct, especially in cases where someone calling 999 is unable to give details to an operator and the call has to be traced. We viewed this problem very seriously and have been investigat-

One in four fails to save for pension

By ANNE ASHWORTH

LESS than a third of consumers consider a pension to be a financial necessity for their current lifestyle. This and other findings of a Mintel survey published today suggests that the Government will be hard pressed to encourage people to save more for retirement, despite the pensions Green Paper reforms set out this week.

The survey, conducted this month, found that 24 per cent were making no provision for retirement. The lack of retirement saving was most pronounced among those under 25 and among the socio-economic groups D and E where 60 per cent had no pension.

The Paper, *A New Contract for Welfare-Partnership in Pensions*, says the low-paid, mothers looking after children at home, and carers should benefit from a new state pension scheme. Those paid between £9,000 and £18,500 will be offered national insurance rebates to invest in second pensions.

Cohen facing disqualification over Chancery

By RICHARD MILES, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE chairman of Chancery, the banking group that collapsed in 1991 with £45 million losses, was yesterday accused of "creative accounting" in a report published by Department of Trade and Industry inspectors.

Harvey Cohen, who was also chief executive of Chancery, had such a strong desire to meet market expectations "that he adopted unacceptable forms of creative accounting to achieve his aim", according to the DTI report.

"We speculate that Cohen was motivated by pride," say the inspectors in their explanation for the demise of Chancery, a property-based lender which sunk under the weight of bad debts when the 1980s property boom turned to bust.

The DTI said yesterday that it intends to seek the disqualification of Mr Cohen as a director under 1986 legislation,

along with two fellow Chancery directors, Geoffrey Berger and Michael Hill. Mr Cohen currently holds more than 10 directorships.

Shares in Chancery were suspended in February 1991 after a plan to regenerate capital failed when its chief banker, Manufacturers Hanover Trust, refused to renew a main line of credit. The company's listing was cancelled in 1992.

Despite accounts revealing losses of £45 million, compared to pre-tax profits of £7.9 million at Chancery's peak, the creditors agreed in late 1991 to the conversion of £40 million of debt to equity and the rescheduling of £90 million in debt over five years.

The Bank's inspectors filed their report in November 1992, which was then passed to the DTI. Chancery owes more than £80 million to creditors.

Shopping malls sold for \$2.5bn

TrizecHahn, one of North America's largest real estate firms, has sold its shopping mall portfolio for \$2.5 billion (about £1.49 billion). The company has also completed deals worth a total of \$1.5 billion to buy American office space. Its acquisitions involved 22 office buildings in New York, Chicago, Dallas and elsewhere.

TrizecHahn, owner of North America's two tallest structures, Sears Tower in Chicago and CN Tower in Toronto, has snapped up \$2.8 billion of real estate this year, about 25.5 million sq ft. Its office portfolio has burgeoned by more than 60 per cent over past year. The Toronto-based firm said the occupancy rate in its new offices ranged from 80 to 85 per cent and the average rent was more than 25 per cent below current market value. Last month TrizecHahn said it planned to spend \$500 million in the next two to five years to build shopping and entertainment facilities in Europe.

Tote may pull Coral bid

THE TOTE is thought to be considering withdrawing from the bidding for the Coral bookmaking chain put up for sale by Ladbroke. Analysts believe that the gap between The Tote's bid of about £345 million and the estimated £375 million offered by the two venture capital firms at the head of the shortlist is too wide to bridge. Within the next few days The Tote must decide whether to raise its offer or leave the field open to Civen and Morgan Grenfell Private Equity, the London-based venture capital arm of Deutsche Bank.

Markets look to merge

THE future of the Alternative Investment Market may be called into question after a meeting of European stock markets that called for smaller growing companies. Amsterdam NIMAX, Euro.NM Belgium, Neuer Markt Frankfurt, Paris Nouvelles Marchés, Borsa Italiana and three other markets plan to create a pan-European market next year for high-growth companies — a move that parallels an alliance of the senior markets. Representatives of the London Stock Exchange, responsible for AIM, also attended the meeting in Stockholm on Wednesday.

BA delay defended

PETER MANDELSON, the Trade and Industry Secretary, denied yesterday that he has delayed making a decision on the proposed alliance between British Airways and American Airlines. However, he told British Airways, who had requested a deferral after the acrimonious collapse of "open skies" talks between the US and the UK, that "there were a number of issues on which more progress had to be made before I could reach a final decision". A decision from the Minister had been expected in the autumn.

Bank merger agreed

SAUDI INTERNATIONAL BANK, based in London, and Bahrain's Gulf International Bank (GIB) have agreed to merge by the first quarter of 1999. Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) and JP Morgan, the two main shareholders in SIB, with 50 per cent and 20 per cent, will receive GIB shares. GIB, the commercial banking subsidiary of Kuwait's Gulf Investment Corp, reported a net profit of \$96 million (£51 million) in 1997. Saudi International reported a \$38 million profit.

Microsoft appeals

MICROSOFT has lodged an appeal against a court decision ordering it to market the original version of a programming language developed by Sun Microsystems. A federal court in San Jose, California, on November 18 ruled in favor of Sun, which had accused Microsoft of violating a licensing contract by altering Sun's Java programming language to improve its compatibility with Microsoft's Windows operating system. Java is a potential rival to Windows.

Jones Stroud setback

SHARES in Jones Stroud fell 24½p, to 125p, after the maker of components for the textile and electrical industries said that it did not expect any immediate easing of difficult trading conditions. The company, reporting pre-tax profits for its half year to September 30 of £2.3 million, down from £3.3 million, said prices had been under pressure, particularly from foreign rivals. Turnover was £40.2 million (£41.6 million). Earnings per share were 8.3p (14.2p). The interim payout stays at 5.5p.

Antisoma's £25m tag

TRADING began yesterday in shares of Antisoma, the London cancer therapy company that has raised £10 million through a placing on the Easdaq market. Nomura International, Antisoma's adviser, priced the shares at 35p, valuing the company at £25 million — about £5 million below the original target. However, Clyn Edwards, Antisoma's chief executive, said that he was still "very pleased". The money raised will let Antisoma continue work on its ovarian cancer drug.

Eurocopy optimistic

EUROCOPY, the supplier of office machines, has said that it is turning the corner, having given warning 18 months ago of a difficult few years. Pre-tax profits fell to £2.4 million, from £4.5 million, before exceptional losses in the year to September 30. Eurocopy said that the current year's result will be below this. The company said that it expected to resume a growth path and was looking to make acquisitions. Earnings per share were 3.71p (6.06p). A 0.90p final dividend makes 1.35p (2.43p).

Dyson warning

J&J DYSON, the maker of refractories and catalysts, saw pre-tax profits fall by 14 per cent, to £1.34 million, in its half year to September 30. Dyson said that full-year results would be below those of the previous year, and that many consumers in manufacturing were already in recession. Demand for its products had also been affected by sterling's strength, the company said. Earnings per share were 45.7p, against a stated 52.1p last time. The interim dividend is 1.35p (2p).

Banana wrangle referred to WTO

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN GENEVA



Sir Leon Brittan has defended the EU's banana regime

A KEY World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting on the increasingly acrimonious dispute between the European Union and the United States over bananas will reconvene today in Geneva as trade officials seek a resolution before the Christmas holiday.

The WTO stops work at the end of this week and resumes on January 11, just nine days before the US has said it could seek WTO approval — which it believes would be automatic — for imposing sanctions on the EU over the issue.

The meeting will be the second resumption of a session of the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body (DSB), originally convened on November 25 and again on Tuesday.

It follows a call by Sir Leon Brittan, the European Trade Commissioner, for the US to back down from a trade war.

At the heart of the squabble is an assertion by the US and five Latin American countries that the EU's new banana import and marketing regulations violate WTO open trading rules. The EU denies this.

The incoming banana regime was shaped after a WTO panel and an appeals body found that its predecessor — which favoured former European colonies mainly in the Caribbean — breached global trade accords. The US and five

Latin American states — Ecuador, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and Panama — say that the only changes are cosmetic.

On Tuesday the EU asked the DSB to set up a panel to look at the new regime, but the wording of the request was seen by the US and the Latin Americans as demanding a verdict in Brussels' favour.

EU officials say their intention was to push Washington and its allies into formally challenging the new regime by filing their own panel request.

Tomorrow's meeting, coincides with a US-EU summit in Washington at which the long-running trade war over bananas is expected to be on the agenda.

IN Business **WIRE** TOMORROW

Australia \$	2.78	2.80
Canada \$	30.82	31.88
Denmark kr	60.71	55.75
France F	2,689	2,810
Germany M	0.85	0.7875
Japan ¥	11.20	10.31
Netherlands G	5.20	5.25
Portugal Esc	9.85	9.75
Spain Ptas	165.22	162.50
Switzerland S	2.02	2.10
Italy Lit	2,057	2,100
UK £	202.24	201.00
USA \$	0.68	0.68
Denmark kr	3.35	3.40
France F	3.32	3.35
Germany M	2.38	2.40
Japan ¥	258.00	257.00
Netherlands G	10.50	10.50
Portugal Esc	248.00	248.00
Spain Ptas	14.57	14.57
Switzerland S	2.45	2.47
Italy Lit	2,025	2,025
Turkey Lira	1,779	1,779
USA \$	1.45	1.45

Notes for most derivatives contracts are only as supplied by Barclays Bank, unless otherwise stated. Figures are subject to change. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

No time to buy presents? Do I need a concierge service!

Scottish weeks m

NTL eme bidder fo

NTL eme bidder fo

Asda reports a not-so-phoney war

Listening to Allan Leighton talking about the pressures on Asda, it sounds as if supermarkets might actually be fighting each other to win business. Can he really be part of the same industry that is now cast in the malodorous role that used to be the preserve of property developers? Supermarkets surely are enemies of the people, ripping them off at the checkout with their outrageous prices. That is why the Office of Fair Trading is taking a close look at their practices and why a full-blooded Monopolies Commission investigation is now seen as a near certainty.

The bad publicity that has been heaped on the supermarkets of late, and in which the Government appears to have spotted a potential populist cause, bears little relation to the scenario that Mr Leighton was depicting yesterday. Asda customers have, apparently, been enjoying price deflation. With prices going down, the company has been forced to cut costs in order to produce a profits gain and, as Mr Leighton admits, that cost cutting has sliced a bit too close to the bone. The stores and the quality of some of the products in them have not always met the standards that an increasingly sophisticated and choosy customer has come to expect.

Mr Leighton's *mea culpa* on that point came coupled with the insistence that Asda would con-

tinue to push prices down. He could hardly say anything else, with John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading, still looking over his shoulder. But Asda faces a tough task to invest in the stores and product quality while lowering prices. Mr Leighton reckons that the move to ever-larger stores and increasing volume of non-food items will enable him to work the magic.

Sceptical analysts will be impressed if he can pull off the trick. Should that begin to appear difficult, then his attention may return to finding a suitable partner to assist in the act. If the OFT was thought likely to oppose a merger with Safeway before the mood turned so hostile to supermarkets, it would certainly be even more so now. Perhaps the company could reinstate the planned liaison with Kingfisher, although the merits of that partnership were not obviously apparent.

The City is increasingly excited about the prospect of a foreign buyer for Asda, with Wal-Mart the oft-cited favourite. But Asda's sales per square foot are already five times as high as those of the American group. Asda may like the idea of Wal-Mart paying a

hefty premium to take it over but it is less clear why the idea might appeal to the Americans. In any case, it would seem unnecessary, if risky for any overseas buyer to contemplate a move into the British marketplace before the inevitable MMC inquiry pronounces. In the meantime, it is Tesco that continues to look like the outright winner of the battle that much of the media would have us believe is not taking place.

Guilty parties in the rate debacle

Good statistics are particularly important at key economic turning points, when policy decisions are unusually tortuous and their potential effects most crucial. The Treasury Select Committee's report on the Office for National Statistics rightly argued yesterday for the statistical service to have better funding, better peo-

COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

ple and, most importantly, independence from political interference. The report comes at a time of intense scrutiny of the ONS, not least because of the apparent debacle over average earnings figures. After a particularly uncomfortable time for the ONS, it will have come as considerable relief that the main criticisms landed elsewhere. The report pointedly echoed widespread suspicions that criticism of the statisticians by the Treasury and the Bank of England had been a tactic to divert attention from the fact that the Bank, egged on by Treasury wonks, had raised interest rates in June.

Nobody can be sure about the quality of official statistics, yesterday's retail sales figures being a case in point. Every recent survey of retailers has told us that a Black Christmas is on its way. Yet according to the ONS, retail sales bounced in November. What is the Monetary Policy Committee to make of that?

The MPC has been taking surveys of opinion more seriously of late because of the considerable impact that a loss of confidence can have on the path of the economy — whether or not that loss of nerve is justified. Is it right, however, to take note of readings of retailers' confidence rather than their customers' spending? What retailer, knowing that more interest rate cuts are in the wind, is going to express burgeoning confidence when the pollsters come round? If anything, the MPC's recent willingness to act on surveys showing falling confidence gives retailers — and others who lobby the policymakers in their own interests — even more of an incentive to predict the end of the world.

It would be a wonderful world if economic statistics — or anecdote — offered a totally reliable picture of "what is going on out there" but that is an implausible prospect. The policy makers need to pay attention to both and the

members are paid to temper what they read and hear with judgement and instinct. It was their misinterpretation of the picture which was to blame for the failure to cut rates fast enough. The ONS was guilty of providing duff information but the MPC was equally guilty for relying on it.

The spectre at the feast

Friendly mergers naturally cause a degree of discontent among those investors who had been looking forward to receiving a hefty bid premium for their stock. But it seems that the outrage expressed by one shareholder over the happy coming together of Siebe and BTR has been manufactured more from anticipation than disappointment. You have to admire the style.

Highfields Capital, the US investment fund, appears to have acquired its 1 per cent stake in BTR after the deal was announced. Now, its directors claim that they "take strong issue with BTR's failure to actively explore other possible business combinations". Highfields even

ventures to suggest that BTR's senior managers may have only agreed to the deal because they would be comfortably accommodated in the new organisation. This appalling allegation has extra piquancy coming, as it does, from a Highfields managing director by the name of Grubman.

Mr Grubman cannot be blamed for trying to earn himself a profit by encouraging a bidder to break up the cosy BTR/Siebe merger but he should prepare for disappointment. As Ian Strachan strategised, BTR had looked increasingly open to offers but none was forthcoming. Siebe is more likely to attract another suitor, but most would risk regulatory obstacles. And if a Siebe bid did emerge, BTR might find itself alone and unloved again. As Mr Grubman must fear.

Politically unsound

PETER MANDELSON's decision to provide employers with a potential escape route from the obligation to recognise trade unions has done little for his popularity among the brothers. Neither should industry be totally sanguine. While he is taking the politics out of competition policy, he is putting the politics firmly back into industry. His new measures seem to vest enormous powers in the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. The job may not always be held by one of his sympathetic disposition to business.



Jim Forbes, left, chief executive of Scottish and Southern Energy, and Roger Young, who is off to a new job in Florida

Shell chief scorns talk of mergers

By OUR CITY STAFF

THE head of Shell's Dutch arm yesterday sought to play down recent merger speculation about the company.

Maarten van den Bergh, chairman of Royal Dutch Petroleum, said that Shell planned no major merger in the short term, claiming that the benefits of such a move would be no greater than those arising from the US\$5 billion (£3 billion) cost-cutting plans announced this week.

However, he reiterated that the company is still interested in co-operation agreements, particularly in downstream operations in Europe. He cited depots in France as a possible area for co-operation.

Mr van den Bergh said he expected US and British air strikes on Iraq to have a limited and short-term effect on oil prices, given the embargo already on Iraqi oil exports.

Americans help Hanson to beat flat UK demand

By PAUL DURMAN

STRONG demand for sand, gravel and other aggregates in the United States has enabled Hanson to shrug off a flat market in building materials in Britain.

The company, which is due to return to the FTSE 100 index next week, yesterday issued an upbeat trading statement. Andrew Dougal, chief executive, said that the second-half growth in trading profit from continuing operations "will exceed the 15 per cent gain achieved in the first half".

Hanson's shares have performed strongly since August, rising from about 300p to 461p, down 4p yesterday. Cornerstone, the group's US aggregates business, performed ahead of expectations, helped by increasing prices and favourable weather that extended the construction sea-

son in the American Mid West and North East.

ARC, the British aggregates operation, delivered a promised rise in second-half profits. UK trading was generally less buoyant, with brick sales hit by a decline in housing starts.

Hanson expects continued growth from the four acquisitions recently made in the US for a total of \$220 million (£130 million). The US construction market is underpinned by a government pledge to spend \$203 billion on an infrastructure improvement programme.

Christopher Collins, chairman, said: "With approximately half of 1999 trading profit forecast to come from a still robust US market, prospects remain good despite a flat UK volume outlook."

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Two left in race for NPI

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

CGU and AMP of Australia have emerged as front-runners in the bid battle for NPI, the mutual insurer. A final decision on NPI's future will be made at a board meeting today.

Swiss Life and Britannic, the two other insurers that made it to NPI's shortlist, have now dropped out of the running.

Swiss Life's bid foundered after the Swiss found tax problems in converting a substantial proportion of the proposed purchase money into sterling. This increased their costs substantially.

Britannic's pitch was unsuccessful because the NPI board felt that the home service distribution was in need of an overhaul before it could compete in the market.

Scottish and Southern seeks more power sites

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

SCOTTISH and Southern Energy, the company formed by the merger of Scottish Hydro-Electric and Southern Electric, is pushing for rapid expansion — by buying more power stations.

The new group is vying for coal-fired power stations that National Power and PowerGen are being forced to sell by the Government to stimulate competition in electricity generation. The move would both enlarge the company and diversify its generation portfolio. At present, most of its capacity is hydro, and new gas-fired power stations are blocked by a moratorium.

Scottish and Southern is

also in talks with retailers and household-name companies about deals to sell gas and electricity to their customers, said Jim Forbes, its chief executive. The company already has a marketing link with Great Universal Stores via Southern Electric.

However, Mr Forbes said that expansion into the US was not on the cards. Scottish Power and National Grid have, over the past two weeks, both announced big US deals and PowerGen has been in talks with several companies. Mr Forbes said: "For every 100 things we look at, 95 or 96 of them will be in the UK and four or five abroad."

The company mapped out its next moves as it announced interim results for the former two operations. At the same time, it emerged that Roger Young, the deputy chairman of the merged group and former chief executive of Scottish Hydro-Electric, is to quit to become president and a director of Florida Power and Light. Mr Young, 54, had already said that he would step down from Scottish and Southern next year although he had said that he planned to retire. He will go to the US in February after overseeing a brief transition phase as the merger is executed.

Scottish Hydro-Electric

Tempus, page 30

NTL emerges as the bidder for Newcastle

By RAYMOND SNODDY AND JASON NISSE

THE mystery bidder for Newcastle United yesterday showed itself to be NTL, the US-owned cable television group, which said it was prepared to offer £160 million for the football club.

Cameron Hall Developments, which owns 57 per cent of the club's shares, has agreed to accept the 111.7p a share bid. Yesterday, CHD, whose chairman is controversial Newcastle director Douglas Hall, also sold NTL a 6.3 per cent stake for £10 million.

NTL said the deal is dependent on there being no complications arising from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation of BSkyB's £625 million recommended offer for Manchester United.

The Hall family's commitment to sell its stake to NTL will last for at least 12 weeks after the publication of the MMC report. The rest of the board said it supported the



Knapp: in for the long term

NTL deal and would recommend a bid if it came, despite it being priced at 17 per cent less than the 135p price at which Newcastle was floated in February last year.

Freddy Fletcher justified this by saying that there was a great deal of froth in the market at the time of Newcastle's float and all football shares had fallen back since then.

Barclay Knapp, chairman of

NTL, an American who played soccer as a child, said: "We are in this for the long term." NTL has been gradually investing in premium rights as a shareholder in Front Row, the successful pay-per-view movie company and in launching a British version of Eurosport, the 24-hour satellite and cable sports channel.

Mr Knapp said that NTL reviewed all Premier League clubs in a search for a target including the four clubs in its cable franchise areas — Middlesbrough, Leicester City, Derby County and Nottingham Forest. However, Newcastle came to the top of the list because of the strength of its fan support and its well-known name.

Newcastle has been embroiled in controversy over the past few weeks after a move to reinstate Mr Hall and Freddy Shepherd, who controls 7 per cent of the club's shares, to the board led to the resignation of Denis Cassidy, the chairman.

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OFFT states case over TV rights

By OUR CITY STAFF

THE Office of Fair Trading said yesterday that its legal challenge to football's Premier League clubs over their collective negotiation of rights to televise games is driven by a desire to satisfy the demand of fans to see more soccer on TV.

The case, to be heard next month in the Restrictive Practices Court, effectively challenges the Premier League's exclusive £670 million deal for 60 games a season to be shown by BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster in which News International (the owner of The Times) holds a 40 per cent stake.

The OFT said yesterday that the agreement restricted access to the 380 Premier League games that are played each season. It believes that the Premier League is operating a cartel and it wants individual clubs to be able to negotiate their own deals with broadcasters. "We want the market to be able to decide how many games there should be on television," one OFT official said.

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STOCK MARKET MICHAEL CLARK

Investors ignore Gulf crisis in thin trading

WORRIES about an escalation of the Gulf crisis and President Clinton's impeachment proceedings were pushed into the background by hard-bitten City investors.



All at sea: Sir Neville Stirlings, chief executive of Tarmac, which rose 5 1/2p to 111 1/4p as merger talks were called off

Many of them have been down this road before and can remember that Wall Street marked the initial Desert Storm conflict in 1991, with what was then the second biggest points rise for the Dow Jones industrial average.

After initial caution, prices clawed their way back to close just a shade below their best of the day. The FTSE 100 index, down almost 40 points in early trading, closed 54.8 up at 5,685.2 in thin conditions that saw 974 million shares change hands. The FTSE 250 index finished 6.3 up at 4,695.9.

Banks were squeezed higher in a market short of stock and the stronger than expected retail sales boosted the store chains. GUS rose 16 1/2p to 62 1/2p and Boots 7p to 97 1/2p.

Zeneca, down 6p to 26 1/2p, continues to talk to the institutions, attempting to convince them that the proposed merger with Sweden's Astra is a good move. Rival Roche of Switzerland has ruled out a move for either party.

Pearson rose 3 1/2p to 111.62 as Cazenove, the broker, placed a line of five million shares at 110.78.

BSky's satellite broadcaster 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of The Times, fell 2 1/2p to 480 1/2p after a large parcel of shares changed hands. BSB Holdings, a joint venture between Pearson, Granada and Pathe, has sold 17 million shares, or 1 per cent of the company, to take advantage of its existing advance corporation tax surplus, before changes are made to the tax system.

BSB continues to hold 203.6 million shares, or 11.5 per cent. Goldman Sachs, the US securities house, acquired the stake as part of a bought deal and may have struggled to place all the shares.

A "strong buy" recommendation from Morgan Stanley Dean Witter lifted Reuters 35 1/2p to 61 1/2p. The US securities house, has also raised its target price from 48p to 67p.

The results from Asda and comments about trading were given the thumbs down. But the shares finished 6 1/2p better at 154p, bolstered by vague talk of a bid from the American

turnover as 353.123 shares changed hands. There is now talk of stakebuilding after three lines of stock totalling 315,000 shares went through at 890p. The speculators claim Misys, up 12 1/2p to 386p, might be poised to make a move.

Newcastle United finished 3 1/2p lower at 98 1/2p despite news of a bid approach from NTL, the media and telecommunications group.

Keep an eye on Silvermines, one of the quoted companies in the Bob Morton sale. The price advanced 4p to 39 1/2p and claims that part of the business would be demerged. There have been some large lines of stock going through the market this week including one million shares on Tuesday and a further 1.5 million at 35p on Wednesday.

Sterling Publishing Group was steady at 14 1/2p, as Herald Investment Trust picked up a further 2.5 million shares. It raises HIT's holding in Sterling to 6.5 million shares, or 7.9 per cent.

Stanford Rook stood out with a jump of 15p, or 13.1 per cent, to 121 1/2p. The company has signed a licensing agreement with Corixa Corporation of the US for its immunotherapeutic treatment for psoriasis, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Trading in Biogen Pluram went off to a positive start after a placing at 245p. The price opened at 260p before eventually closing at 262 1/2p. A total of 601,000 shares were traded.

GILT-EDGED: Dealers reported a further inversion of the yield curve as buyers came in for medium and longer-dated issues. Index-linked issues were also sought after with yields dipping to 2 per cent. Brokers say this is the first time they have reached that level since the first index-linked issues was launched back in 1981.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt rose 16p to 118.60 in thin turnover that saw 18,000 contracts completed. Among conventional issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 climbed 65p to 151.05, while at the shorter end Treasury 7 per cent 2022 finished 17p down at 1107.27.

NEW YORK: Wall Street shrugged off US air attacks on Iraq, with prices higher in early trading. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 87.54 points to 8,878.14.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	Dow Jones	8878.14 (+87.54)
	S&P Composite	1175.61 (+13.67)
Tokyo:	Nikkei Average	14126.99 (+30.96)
Hong Kong:	Hang Seng	10083.31 (+143.92)
Amsterdam:	ADX Index	1113.26 (+18.16)
Sydney:	ASX	2740.0 (+42.7)
Frankfurt:	DAX	4733.81 (+60.36)
Singapore:	SEAC	1366.19 (+7.08)
Brussels:	BE20	3387.48 (+31.10)
Paris:	CAC-40	3751.17 (+43.78)
Zurich:	SIX	1322.00 (+23.00)
London:	FTSE 100	5685.2 (+54.8)
	FTSE 250	4695.9 (+6.3)
	FTSE 350	2679.8 (+22.4)
	FTSE 1000	2610.37 (+28.17)
	FTSE All-Share	2268.21 (+28.87)
	FTSE Financials	156.49 (+4.28)
	FTSE Food	115.48 (+0.39)
	FTSE Govt Secs	374.60
	SEAD Volume	1,673,000
	US\$	1.6738 (-0.0022)
	German Mark	2.7864 (-0.0073)
	Japanese Yen	160.4 (-0.1)
	Bank of England official base rate	5.0%
	ECU	1.4922
	ESBIE	104.4 Nov (3.0%) Jan 1997 - 100
	RFK	162.0 Nov (2.9%) Jan 1987 - 100

RECENT ISSUES

AIM VCT	100	...
Airtours Sub Cw 2004	100	-1
Arizan (UK)	4	...
BFS Dress Inc & Gwth Cap 59p	59	...
BFS Dress Inc & Gwth Inc 118	118	...
Biogen Pluram	262 1/2	...
Cherwell	117 1/2	...
Collective Assets Trust	117	...
Connaught	149 1/2	...
Financial Objects	241 1/2	+1
First Active	295	+2 1/2
Five An Us Cr Ln 2040	116 1/2	...
Carbon	231 1/2	...
MHT Secs Zero Div Pl	32 1/2	...
Morley	11	...
Monthly High Inc Geared	51 1/2	...
Hall Bldg Mills Cr Pl	105	...
Natural Building Mills	5	...
Offshore Tool & Energy	15 1/2	...
Piccadilly Growth Tr	98 1/2	...
REXAM B (100)	99 1/2	...
Singer & Fnd AIM VCT	100	...
Xanova Warrants	13 1/2	...

MARKET CHANGES

LP n/p (7)	1 1/2	...
PPL Therapeutics n/p (80)	5 1/2	...

RISERS

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
Shelfco	105 1/2	+7	+7.5
McKay Socs	139	+14	+11.2
Smith David	105 1/2	+9	+8.6
AI Biotech	35	+2	+5.9
Intelligent Cw	33 1/2	+3	+9.2
Quicks Group	75 1/2	+5	+7.8
Osborne & Little	425	+30	+7.1
Novus BMS	129 1/2	+8	+7.0
FI Group	38 1/2	+2	+5.3
Laird	147	+9	+6.9
Acad	400	+25	+6.3
Novus	242 1/2	+15	+6.2
REXAM	153 1/2	+9	+6.1
Reuters	613	+25	+4.1

FALLS

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
Jones Group	125	-24	-19.2
Laing (L)	247 1/2	-12	-4.8
Adam & Harvey	127 1/2	-10	-7.2
B Steel	90 1/2	-6	-6.9

Conserving energy

SCOTTISH and Southern Energy is just beginning the energy race that may position it as one of the handful of power companies that will dominate the country's utility supply in a few years.

The merger of Scottish Hydro-Electric and Southern Electric, which was approved this week, was an inevitability if both companies were to get some firepower. The fact that there is a genuine merger as opposed to a takeover means that neither side has had to overpay to get critical mass.

The partnership said that it will now try to expand its generation operation by trying for the coal-fired power stations that National Power and PowerGen are being forced to sell. These sales offer Scottish and Southern the best immediate prospect of developing in the UK where it has committed to look for

growth. Jim Forbes, chief executive, has for the moment ruled out looking at the US for purchases - unlike many of the company's competitors.

Yesterday's results from the two halves that now make up Scottish and Southern show the rationale of the merger. Both are trading adequately but show little room for growth as the regulatory clamp tightens.

There is little to gain now in utilities trying to manage their businesses better to improve performance - much of that has already been done after the shake-out from privatisation. The way forward is to consolidate and to build up markets.

Scottish and Southern has chosen that route and is at the starting block. It has ample opportunity before it but until it makes a move the shares should be a hold.

Hanson

HANSON, that corporate warrior of yesterday, is about to return to the City's Premier League by rejoining the FTSE 100. Its shares have climbed by about 50 per cent since the start of September.

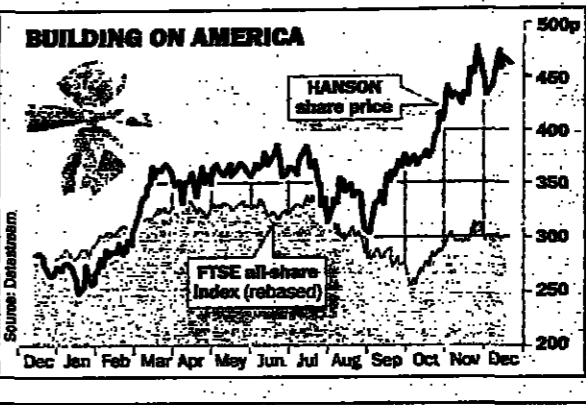
It is now a humble building materials group, selling sand, gravel and bricks. Hanson is still making acquisitions, spending £130 million in the past few months on American aggregates and concrete pipe businesses. This is much less glamorous than the group's glory days, when the Lords Hanson and White chased after Consolidated Gold Fields and ICI. Of course, it was ICI that marked the beginning of the end for old Hanson.

The increased involvement in the US, which is expected to produce half of next year's profits, helps to explain the strength of the shares. De-

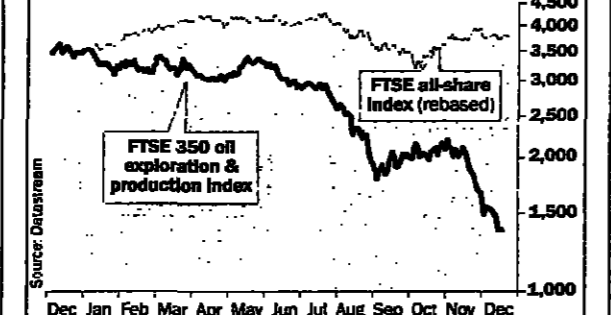
spite the profit warnings from corporate America, the US construction industry remains strong. A mammoth government road building and maintenance programme helps. No wonder Hanson plans to carry on spending in the consolidating US building materials industry.

In the UK, where it owns ARC and Hanson Brick, the outlook is much more soggy. The concern, on both sides of the Atlantic, must be that the impact of slowing economic growth has yet to be fully felt. Hanson's claim to "margin leadership" in the UK would be sorely tested by recession.

FTSE 100 membership should give the shares a further boost - and perhaps an opportunity to take profits.



OIL COMPANIES ON THE OFFENSIVE



THE struggling oil price has received a much needed boost from the air strikes in the Gulf. Will it prove to be the start of a sustained rally, or just a blip?

Up around 80 cents on Wednesday, the price of Brent crude for March delivery closed 23 cents down at \$11.13 a barrel last night.

There were some useful gains among shares of the big oil explorers, although they still closed below their best levels of the day. BP rose 12p to 88 1/2p. Shell 9 1/2p to 358 1/2p. Lasmio

2 1/2p to 103 1/2p. Ranger Oil 2 1/2p to 262 1/2p and Cairn Energy 2 1/2p to 91 1/2p.

Many investors are banking that the crisis will choke off supplies of Iraq's oil supplies totalling 18 million barrels a day.

But Peter Hitchens, at Williams de Broe, the broker, is sceptical. "The US action is concentrated on the suspected arms sites and is not expected to harm the oil infrastructure," he said.

If that is the case, then the outlook for the oil sector remains gloomy.

Electra

THE pioneer of venture capital investment trusts has achieved an impressive track record in picking the right unlisted companies across the world to back. Over one, three, five and ten years, the £1 billion trust has succeeded in increasing its assets faster than the FTSE all-share index.

Yet shareholders have rarely felt all the benefit of this impressive performance. Electra's shares stand at a 22 per cent discount to its net asset value. That said, Electra's shares have grown by 89 per cent over five years, much better than its international benchmark, the FTSE 100 world index.

Electra wants to improve returns for shareholders by halving the discount. It has already pledged to take advantage of tax changes coming in April and buy up to 10 per cent of its shares in order to narrow the gap.

Of course there is no guarantee that this will happen. But given that Electra is hoping to see an increase in investment opportunities as the economy slows down - after all, new businesses and ambitious managements will need finance more than ever next year - there is every prospect that the Electra team will continue to work its magic.

Continued strong performance, plus a potential 10 per cent uplift, is an enticing offer that investors should not ignore. Buy.

Newcastle Utd

THERE are only a handful of truly international brands in British football. Manchester United, Liverpool and Arsenal certainly qualify; so do Rangers and Celtic in Scotland. Newcastle United is a club that should be dining at the top table, but every time it reaches those heights it finds a way of messing up and tumbling back into mediocrity.

As the third-largest cable company in Britain, NTL also does not qualify as a global player in the media world. So it is appropriate that it has emerged as the potential buyer for Newcastle. The likely £160 million deal is at a 17 per cent discount to Newcastle's flotation price in February last year and is dependent on BSKyB's £623 million bid for Manchester United being waved through.

Newcastle shares fell 3 1/2p to 98 1/2p yesterday, indicating that the market thinks both that the NTL bid is worth accepting but that it probably will not go ahead.

Bewildered Newcastle shareholders might wonder what to do. The answer is to hold on. Should BSKyB prove successful, Newcastle investors should be glad of NTL's 11.7p a share. If BSKyB is blocked on Manchester United, the scramble for media rights that ensues should ensure that even mediocre Newcastle shares are worth far in excess of 100p.

COMMODITIES

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Dec	1037-1035	Mar	1037-1035
Jan	1037-1035	Jun	1037-1035
Feb	1037-1035	Sep	1037-1035
Mar	1037-1035	Dec	1037-1035
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Apr	1037-1035	Jan	

The crash that most firms fear is a computer failure

Survey finds that problems with new systems are widespread and costly, says Jason Nissé

IT IS the same old story. You install a new computer system, or even new software into your old computer, and it does not work. Error messages, which might as well be Hungarian for all the sense they make, appear on your screen. You call the systems support people and, after a long wait listening to more Vivaldi than you ever wished to hear, a spotty youth who has only just started shaving starts barking some jargon down the line. In response you plead: "All I want to do is find the file I was working on. Please help me."

Well, look on the bright side. You are not alone. According to a survey of more than 300 medium-sized manufacturing businesses, conducted by FMC, a company that specialises in solving disputes between companies and their

supplier, eight out of 10 firms reckon that new computers caused them knock-on costs that they could not have predicted before they bought the computers. To add insult to injury, one fifth of companies say the problems that they have with their computers have taken more than a year to solve.

The survey, conducted during the autumn found that nearly three quarters of firms found that they had problems with their new computer systems after they had been installed, and that six out of ten firms had to call in their supplier to sort out these problems. Of the problems, 35 per cent of firms said the system had crashed on them, losing time, data and money; nearly half

of the businesses had to start doing supposedly computerised tasks, such as sending out invoices, by hand because the problems were so bad.

More worryingly only a fifth of the people who had problems with their new systems were able to have those problems fixed within a month. Nearly half had problems for longer than six months and a fifth were still waiting for the thing to function as it was supposed to a year after it was delivered. If this had been a car, a TV or a piece of manufacturing machinery, most firms would have sent it back to the makers by then and gone out to buy something different.

The trouble, according to Keith Salm-

on, chairman of FMC, is that it is not so easy to chuck out your computers. Of the companies surveyed, 61 per cent had spent more than £30,000 on their faulty computers and 20 per cent had spent over £100,000. More than one in five had spent as much upgrading a system as they had spent buying it in the first place. The systems had often taken up to six months to install, and so starting again was not an option.

FMC gives, as an example, a power tool maker which is one of its clients. The company spent more than £1 million on a new system to link all the terminals at its distribution sites around the country. As soon as the system was installed it was clear that it was not up

to the task. The response time when information was sent from the remote terminals to the central computer and back again was painfully slow, and documents took so long to be produced that staff had to work overtime to fill in simple customers orders.

The tool maker went back to its supplier and asked for the system to be sorted out. The computer company refused, saying that what was needed was a much more powerful system and that it could only do the work if the power tool supplier upgraded the system at a cost nearly £500,000. The tool firm had to threaten legal action before it could persuade the computer supplier to make the system that it had sup-

plied do the job that it was supposed to. Even so, the power tool maker reckons that the whole process cost it time, money and a large amount of management grief. Had it known how things were to turn out it would never have started the process.

Not surprisingly, FMC's report has caused some anguish within the computer industry, not least at Sage and Pegasus, the two accounting software specialists who are among the largest suppliers of systems to manufacturing industry. Sage has questioned the veracity of the research — but FMC says that the work was based on genuine customer responses.

Anybody who has had a new computer system installed recently will undoubtedly feel that FMC's report rings painfully true.

No smoke from the oilfields puts traders out of firing line

Gulf conflict this time should not let Saddam hold the market to ransom, writes Carl Mortished

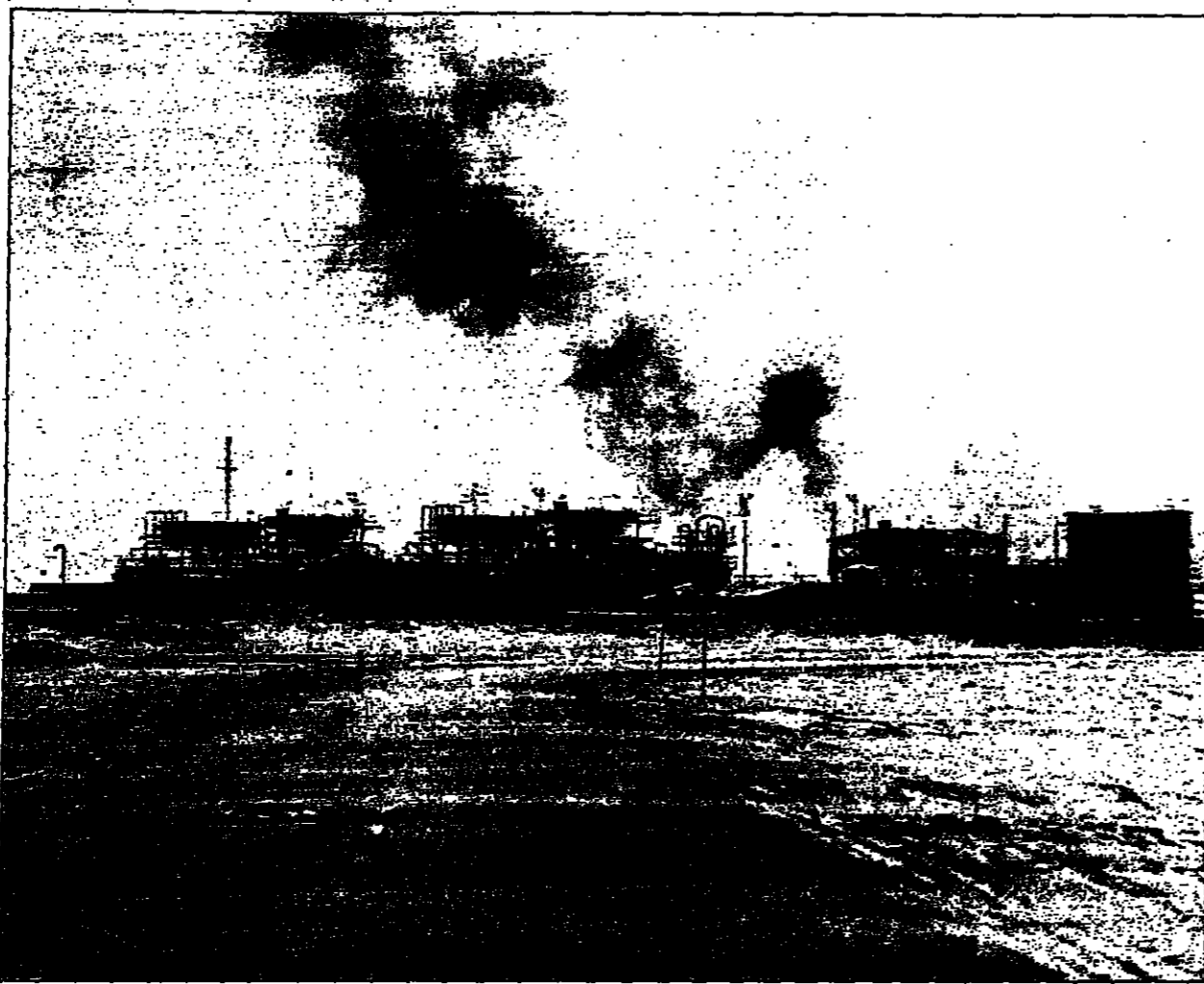
Oil traders who frantically bought Brent Crude contracts on Wednesday night might now empathise with Bertolt Brecht's character in *Mother Courage*, pushing her cart across empty battlefields looking for customers, who says: "Don't tell me peace has broken out, when I've just bought some new supplies."

The first positive move in the oil price in many months has left them caught with long forward positions and no sign of damage to oil installations.

It could still all turn nasty but the markets seem to be recovering from the sight of the fireworks on late television news bulletins. The Brent January crude oil contract initially gained almost \$1 but has since fallen back, because of a dearth of news footage of blazing oilfields. A rally in gold, a traditional safe haven in times of strife, also failed to maintain momentum and the dollar — another secure bolthole — lost its early gains.

Mother Courage thinks war a good business but while financial markets are often cynical, they are rarely as thoughtless as the old woman of Brecht's dramatic parable. The equity markets have taken a relaxed view so far of the consequences of the Anglo-American attack on Iraq. In fact, the focus of the US stock market is on domestic, rather than foreign, troubles. The possible impeachment of President Clinton is attracting more attention from investors than Scud missiles.

The last time Saddam Hussein and the West came to blows, the market took a dive but for specific reasons. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 delivered a body blow to Wall Street; by October, the Dow had fallen almost 500 points and the FTSE 100 lost 15 per cent of its value. The fear was of oil price-led inflation; the price of the benchmark Brent crude contract soared to \$41 per barrel as the market



Oil stocks are high and there is little risk that US motorists will be queuing for gasoline unless Iraq torches oilfields again

frenzied, that Kuwait would be the first to fall in a string of Gulf dominoes which would ultimately lead to Iraqi control over a substantial part of the Gulf's oil exports. That would lead to a repeat of the oil crisis of 1973, delivering a bout of cost inflation to a market suffering recessionary pressures.

The launch of Desert Storm was therefore a relief and the Dow soared on the assumption that America would prevail and the Gulf would remain open for business.

Philip Isherwood, equity strategist at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, recalls the last conflict: "The market rallied the night the war commenced. The issue then was whether the world was going to be held to ransom by Saddam."

Today there is little risk that American motorists will soon be queuing for gasoline. As Mr Isherwood puts it: "There are buckets of oil about." He reckons Wall Street is in a more cyni-

cal mood, preferring to see the Iraqi strike as an attempt to divert attention from America's central concern. "The issue now is about domestic US politics in terms of how impeachment is going to affect the market."

This time, the markets believe that Desert Storm will be more discreet than Stormin' Norman Schwarzkopf of eight years ago. As the Cruise missiles flew to their targets, oil tankers were yesterday loading Iraqi oil at Ceyhan in Turkey and at Mina Al-Bakr, Iraq's Gulf port. That alone was enough to remove most of Wednesday's oil price gain.

As Leo Drollas, of the Centre for Global Energy Studies, explains, the US will go to enormous pains to ensure that the UN-sponsored oil-for-food exports continue. To do otherwise would hand over a powerful propaganda weapon to Saddam.

Mr Drollas reckons there are still dangers: "It depends on how the conflict unfolds." He points to the risk that an attack on a vessel could cause shipowners to ban further loadings in the area and there is always the possibility of the self-inflicted wound, disguised as a battle casualty.

"The Iraqis might destroy some installations. They have done it before. During the Iran-Iraq war they blew up one of their own terminals."

But there are more fundamental reasons why the oil futures markets are remaining sanguine. Iraq is exporting some 1.7 million barrels of crude per day, of which only half is exported via the more vulnerable southern Gulf port. Oil stocks remain high, thanks to a mild winter in the US. To have a significant impact on crude oil prices, they need to be reduced to more normal levels. According to Mr Drollas, that would require a

cut of 390 million barrels. Iraq would have to stop exporting for more than six months to bring down the stock overhang," he said.

Shares in the big oil companies took some comfort from the sight of the US missile attack but it is unlikely to last. Oil companies have more to gain from this week's meeting in Madrid of the Saudi Arabian, Venezuelan and Mexican oil ministers. All three countries have been crippled by loss of revenue. While the Gulf states have been turning over the US attack, in private their oil ministers are probably more than pleased.

Mexico has lost \$3.4 billion in revenues; Venezuela is crippled by debt and Saudi Arabia is now borrowing abroad amid rumours it is having difficulty paying civil service salaries. Mr Drollas reckons Opec needs to cut a further 1 million barrels from daily output, on top of meeting last summer's

agreed cut of 2.6 million. "Opec will have to act, they cannot rely on Saddam."

The market reaction to the attack on Iraq is intriguing. Instead of restoring fears of inflation, traders in commodities are shrugging off events, again pointing the finger at supply and marking prices down.

On Wednesday, gold ticked up a few dollars but yesterday more than lost the initial gain. The Middle East is a big gold consumer but panic buying is unlikely. According to Larry Kaplan of Flemings: "You might expect them to buy gold if the oil price was high and they had the cash to pay for it."

More ominously, he points to a vote yesterday in the Swiss Parliament. The lower house approved legislation which may, in due course, permit the Swiss Central Bank to sell some of its bullion reserves.

Even the holiday firms are unfused. Desert Storm affected the airline industry badly as Americans, fearful of Scud missiles and terrorism, stayed at home. Already affected by recession and high fuel costs, air carriers suffered a 27 per cent fall in revenue passenger miles. The last Gulf War caused a 40 per cent drop in bookings at Thomas Cook but yesterday an industry spokesman predicted less panic from travellers with Israel the only destination to lose traffic.

Iraq might still cause the markets to take fright but the signs yesterday suggested that bigger forces are making different kinds of mischief. Deflation is still gripping the commodity markets. If Saddam has time to reflect in his bunker, he may realise that the falling price of oil is a bigger threat to him than American guns.

Pity poor Mother Courage; as she wheels her wagon, the price of her wares is tumbling.

High-tech investors need to club together

From Mr David Beer
Sir, Mr Grainger (Business Letters, December 9) should back his comments with time and money when he complains, with some justification, that there is a lack of will among investors in the tech-type business. There is seldom a balance sheet to fall back on.

We see about 1,500 investment proposals a year, of which I guess about a half are high-tech, and about 30 per cent of our 400 private investors are allegedly keen on new ideas. Even we can find it a challenge to get the two sides together for sensible discussions.

Can I suggest that Mr Grainger helps me put together a "club" of our investors to

provide some cohesion to funding technology-based ideas in the £100,000 to £500,000 range. After all, our investors have about £300 million available, which should go a long way towards resolving the very issues raised by Mr Grainger. He cannot do this on his own — the Financial Services Act assumes that investors are idiots and if he does try to introduce investors to businesses, the Act may well brand him a criminal.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID BEER,
Beer & Partners,
The Bell House,
West Street,
Dorking,
Surrey,
RH4 1BS.

Is state pension pooling next?

From Mr J. G. R. Rix
Sir, one can sympathise with Oskar Lafontaine, because of the fiscal situation he inherited from the "economic ignoramus" Helmut Kohl (Anglo-Kaletsky, Listen to Lafontaine, December 3) of job-crippling social and tax costs to employers, and the consequential high unemployment, and a budget deficit on the edge of the 3 per cent Maastricht limit.

What has not been commented on is his further problem of unfunded state pension liabilities, with a present value of some 100 per cent of one year's GDP (per IMF estimate). Immediate funding of this at a 4 per cent interest rate would raise the German deficit to 7 per cent and incur huge European Central Bank fines.

Unfortunately, France is in an almost identical position. This is no excuse for "exporting" the problem to the UK, which at present makes a direct net contribution of some £3 billion a year, and runs a trade deficit, exclud-

ing oil, of about £12 billion a year with the EU nations, thus exporting perhaps 480,000 jobs (at one job per £25,000 of net imports).

Henry Lafontaine, as well as trying to sort out his own job-destroying set-up, could read the reports of the Court of Auditors to the EU over the past several years, and lead a drive within the EU to cut fraud, and subsidies such as the £800 million to tobacco growers, and install financial control systems that demanded some accountability, and take "policing" of EU policies away from the states that benefit from flouting them.

Perhaps he would begin to understand why many "Brits" do not want to be at the heart of a bureaucratic-run, fraud-ridden, subsidy-crazed, fraudulent European Union.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN RIX,
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GU35 3RF.

Bid brewing

TIM BRIDGE, the convivial chief executive of Greene King, the Abbot Ale brewer, has been unusually reticent of late. Ever since Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries launched its hostile bid for Marston's, there have been murmurings that Bridge and his cohorts have been envious in their Westgate Brewery fortress in Bury St Edmunds, debating whether to enter the fray.

A few years back, Greene King had a decidedly ham-fisted tilt at Morland, somehow losing out despite launching its bid with more than 40

per cent of the shares already under its belt. But that was before Bridge took the helm, and his successful purchase of the Magic Pub Company in 1996 should ensure a good reception if he decides to make a move on Marston's.

Marston's, too, appears to be warming to the idea of a counterbid. "We'd be interested in a white knight, but we're not hankering after one," says Mike Thompson, the Marston's finance director. In my experience, there's nothing like the prospect of a high-stakes bidding battle to get people hankering.

ANOTHER of those self-serving, rather tedious pieces of research plunks on to my desk. A survey commissioned by Visa Debit, *The Psychology of Gift Giving*, gives 12 good reasons as to why consumers should not give money as a gift. Apparently people consider gifts of money to be both impersonal and an insult to their financial situation. Personally, I've always enjoyed such insults.

Cohen aura
THE official report into the collapse of the Chancery banking



group in 1991 is pretty damning of Harvey Cohen, chief executive, although in an interview with the DIT inspectors he rejected suggestions that his style of management was partly to blame. "People were not frightened of me, that's quite a wrong impression," he said.

But Michael Lay, a senior manager with the bank, gave a rather different view. "A number of people did feel very apprehensive about talking to him," he said. "He had an aura about him. He was slightly aloof, and you had to look in to see him. If you were a minute late, you would get a roasting. He was quite hard, quite stand-offish with people. It was his baby and people knew that."

Unfortunately, shareholders were left holding the baby. Or rather the bathwater.

Top man

A TALE reaches me of a woman who went into a Ted Baker store in London to buy a jacket for her son. But the only store in the chain that had the £189 jacket in stock was the one in New York. Undaunted, the woman paid \$200 to have it couriered across the Atlantic.

By the time the garment reached Britain, Ray Kelvin, the group's chief executive, had got wind of the situation. Kelvin personally delivered it to the woman's house in his chauffeur-driven limo.

Weasel wise

GOOD news from the riverbank. Ratty is back at St Katharine Docks. City Diary readers will be aware that three villainous weasels made off with his head on Friday. The theft, from a Christmas grotto depicting a scene from *The Wind in the Willows*, left the blind Mole all alone in the Wild Wood and estates staff at Taylor Woodrow distraught.

However, Christmas spirit has gripped one weasel. He was spotted by a security guard late on Wednesday returning Ratty with his head. The suspect, dressed in a smart suit, claimed to have found it in a nearby bush, then scuttled off towards Commodity Quay. "We are delighted he

is back and that Mole is happy," said a Taylor Woodrow spokesman.

SPORTING INDEX, the spread betting outfit, is about to take on its two biggest rivals — IG Index and City Index — in the financial betting stakes. It has lured four of City Index's eight dealers to launch the operation, although they are contractually prevented from starting their new jobs until March 1. City Index, which has already taken on five new dealers to replace them, seems to have taken the defection rather well. "It's a competitive world out there," says a spokesman. "Such are the vagaries of the commercial world."

DOMINIC WALSH



INTEREST RATES EFFECTIVE FROM 18TH DECEMBER 1998.		FLEMING Premier Banking		
Account Balance	Net % PA	Net % AER	Gross % PA	Gross % AER
Current Account				
£100,000+	4.40	4.47	5.50	5.51
£25,000 - 99,999	4.20	4.27	5.25	5.30
£10,000 - 24,999	4.00	4.07	5.00	5.10
£5,000 - 9,999	3.80	3.87	4.75	4.85
£1,000 - 4,999	3.60	3.67	4.50	4.60
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Premier Account				
£100,000+	3.20	3.25	4.00	4.07
£25,000 - 99,999	2.84	2.88	3.55	3.61
£10,000 - 24,999	2.48	2.47	3.05	3.09
£5,000 - 9,999	2.12	2.12	2.65	2.69
£0 - 4,999	1.12	1.13	1.45	1.41
Classic Account				
£100,000+	2.80	2.84	3.50	3.56
£25,000 - 99,999	2.40	2.43	3.00	3.04
£10,000 - 24,999	2.00	2.00	2.50	2.52
£5,000 - 9,999	1.60	1.60	2.00	2.07
£0 - 4,999	1.12	1.12	1.40	1.41
Corporate Account				
£100,000+	3.20	3.25	4.00	4.07
£25,000 - 99,999	2.80	2.84	3.50	3.56
£10,000 - 24,999	2.40	2.43	3.00	3.04
£5,000 - 9,999	2.00	2.00	2.50	2.52
£0 - 4,999	1.48	1.48	1.85	1.87
£0 - 999	1.12	1.12	1.40	1.41
Client Account				
£25,000+	3.20	3.24	4.00	4.05
£5,000 - 24,999	3.04	3.07	3.80	3.85
£0 - 4,999	2.28	2.30	2.85	2.88
Saver 30				
£25,000+	4.88	4.90	6.10	6.27
£10,000 - 24,999	4.60	4.61	5.80	6.00
£5,000 - 9,999	4.40	4.46	5.70	5.95
£1,200 - 4,999	3.65	3.65	4.50	4.58
Assist 30				
£100,000+	4.80	4.81	6.00	6.17
£25,000 - 99,999	4.52	4.51	5.66	5.80
£10,000 - 24,999	4.16	4.15	5.40	5.54
£5,000 - 9,999	4.00	4.07	5.00	5.12
Texas Account				
Fixed			6.25	6.28
Flexi			5.50	5.50
Saver & Prosper Investment Account				
£100,000+	4.40	4.47	5.50	5.51
£25,000 - 99,999	4.20	4.27	5.25	5.30
£10,000 - 24,999	4.00	4.07	5.00	5.10
£5,000 - 9,999	3.80	3.87	4.75	4.85
£1,000 - 4,999	3.60	3.67	4.50	4.60
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Saver & Prosper Reward 30				
£100,000+	4.80	4.88	6.10	6.27
£25,000 - 99,999	4.60	4.61	6.00	6.17
£10,000 - 24,999	4.40	4.46	5.70	5.85
£5,000 - 9,999	4.20	4.27	5.50	5.59
£1,200 - 4,999	3.45	3.45	4.50	4.58
Saver & Prosper Fast-Track ISA				
£5,000 - 9,999	4.56	4.56	5.70	5.85
£1,000 - 4,999	3.80	3.85	4.80	4.88
ACCOUNTS NO LONGER OFFERED TO NEW DEPOSITORS				
Deposit Account				
£10,000+	3.20	3.24	4.00	4.05
£5,000 - 9,999	2.80	2.83	3.50	3.56
£1,000 - 4,999	1.12	1.12	1.40	1.41
Variable Rate Deposit Account				
£25,000+	2.76	2.81	4.70	4.78
£10,000 - 24,999	2.58	2.61	4.45	4.53
£5,000 - 9,999	2.40	2.41	4.20	4.28
£1,200 - 4,999	2.16	2.18	3.70	3.73
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50

For further information call 0800 092 2265.

AER is the rate adjusted to show the effective annual rate paid if interest applied during the year remains in the account and earns interest. All interest rates are quoted variable unless otherwise stated and rounded for illustrative purposes. Rates are correct as at the time of printing. Interest will be payable net of lower rate Income Tax. Non-taxpayers may be eligible to receive gross interest subject to the required registration. Interest is paid at 0.5% gross on the first £500 if balance is below £25,000. No interest is paid on first £5,000 if balance is below £20,000. Robert Fleming & Co. Limited (Registered office: 25 Capital Avenue, London, EC2R 7DR. Registered in England No. 282211) is an authorised institution under the Banking Act 1987, a signatory to The Banking Code, a member of the Deposit Protection Scheme and of the British Bankers' Association. Saver & Prosper Group Limited acts as agent for Robert Fleming & Co. Limited. Fleming Premier Banking is a trading name of Robert Fleming & Co Limited. Telephone calls may be recorded for security purposes. 21/06/98

Shares rally after early fall

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Table of stock prices categorized by sector: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, BUILDING MATERIALS, CHEMICALS, CONSTRUCTION, DISTRIBUTORS, ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC & ELECT, ENGINEERING, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, HEALTHCARE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT, INSURANCE, INVESTMENT TRUSTS, LEISURE & HOTELS, MINING, OIL & GAS, OTHER FINANCIAL, PHARMACEUTICALS, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, RETAILERS FOOD, RETAILERS GENERAL, SUPPORT SERVICES, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT, WATER.

Main table of stock prices with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, % Change, and P/E Ratio. Includes sub-sections for SHORTS (under 5 years), LONGS (over 15 years), UNLISTED, and INDEX-LINKED on project completion.

Table of stock prices categorized by sector: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, BUILDING MATERIALS, CHEMICALS, CONSTRUCTION, DISTRIBUTORS, ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC & ELECT, ENGINEERING, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, HEALTHCARE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT, INSURANCE, INVESTMENT TRUSTS, LEISURE & HOTELS, MINING, OIL & GAS, OTHER FINANCIAL, PHARMACEUTICALS, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, RETAILERS FOOD, RETAILERS GENERAL, SUPPORT SERVICES, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT, WATER.

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Asian cr... Elect... celebra... art of g... timin... Chase to exceed analysts' forecasts... Independen...

Asian crisis may cost UK taxpayers £260m

THE British taxpayer could lose £260 million as a result of Indonesia's inability to pay its bills, part of a massive rise in the UK's exposure to bad debts overseas (Adam Jones writes).

Through its Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD), the Government underwrote deals between UK exporters and Indonesia, guaranteeing to rescue the Asian government if it was unable to make loan repayments. The ECGD said yesterday that it would meet claims for £260 million between now and March 2000. It may be able to claim the money back when and if the economy recovers. However, the ECGD is still recovering debts incurred by Latin America in the early 1980s.

The overall expected loss on trade sponsored by the ECGD since 1991 rose from £20.9 million in the 1996-97 financial year to £752.5 million in 1997-98. A further £120 million loss is expected on the highest-risk deals that were taken on for political reasons. Problem regions include Russia and Pakistan.

Despite the anticipated losses, the ECGD made £445 million in cash for the Government in 1997-98 because total claims fell 33 per cent. It said reserves built up in good years "will cover claims we need to pay for some time". The ECGD is now looking to give more weight to regional rather than just country-specific risks.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Hong Kong jobless at record 5.5% high

HONG KONG'S unemployment rate rose to a record 5.5 per cent for the three months to November. The provisional seasonally adjusted joblessness rate for September to November was the highest since government tracking of such figures began in 1981. It compares with 5.2 per cent for August to October, and represents a rise of 3.1 points from the 2.4 per cent in the three months to November 1997. Economists expect the seasonal rate to stay at about 5.5 per cent in the next two months, with rises of only about 0.1 points.

However a fresh wave of redundancies is expected after the Chinese New Year in mid-February, and most economists expect unemployment to peak in the first or second quarter. HSBC analysts expect it to peak at 6.5 per cent within the next six months. Companies in the former British colony have also attacked their costs through wage cuts, causing an increase in underemployment to 2.9 per cent in the three months to November, from 2.7 per cent previously.

Sainsbury's card boost

J SAINSBURY, the supermarket chain, has linked its customer loyalty card to 12 leading high street brands. From January 3, Sainsbury's 13 million cardholders will be able to take advantage of offers to use their Sainsbury's Reward vouchers at Burton Menswear, Dorothy Perkins, Evans, Hawkhead, Principles, Racing Green, Top Shop, Top Man, Burger King, British Gas, Blockbuster and Harry Ramsden's.

Wardle's forecast

SHARES in Wardle Stores yesterday rose 9p to 355p as the diversified industrial products company said that it expected full-year profits to be in line with current City expectations. Its annual meeting was told that the technical products division is still affected by difficult market conditions, but that benefits of cost cutting now being implemented will be apparent by the financial year's end. The shares were 570p in May.

McKay on the up

McKAY SECURITIES, the property developer, reported a 48 per cent increase in interim profits, most of which was down to its share of the profits from its investment in the Ansell's Business Park at Fleet in Hampshire. Pre-tax profits for the six months to September 30 came in at £2.7 million. Operational profits were up 13 per cent. Earnings per share were 5.03p (5.19p) and the interim dividend is up 17 per cent to 2p.

Loss for Salvage

UNIVERSAL SALVAGE, the vehicle salvage company, fell to a £900,000 loss in its half year to October 31, from a £1 million profit last time. It blamed a continued decline in prices that it is getting for vehicles at auction. Gross margins fell to 7.7 per cent, from 13.1 per cent. Turnover rose 13 per cent to £42.3 million. The loss per share was 2.42p (2.46p earnings). The interim dividend falls to 0.1p (1.65p). The shares fell 12p to 42½p.

Railtrack choice

RAILTRACK has declared preferred bidders for infrastructure maintenance work worth £220 million. GTRM, part of Tarmac, is preferred bidder for contracts covering the rail network's West Midlands, Cumbrian and South Wales area. AMEC, the engineer, is preferred bidder for West Anglia and for North London. First Engineering, a buyout, had earlier been declared preferred bidder for two contracts in Scotland.

Electra celebrates art of good timing

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

A GOOD sense of timing saw Electra Investment Trust, the £1 billion venture capital investor, ride out the stock market crash and generate £82.9 million in the 12 months to the end of September.

By disposing of £371 million of investments, £42.3 million more than it bought, Electra was able to take advantage of stock market highs, boosting its assets before the downturn in the late summer.

Michael Stoddart, the outgoing chairman, said the buoyant corporate mergers and acquisitions market in the first three quarters had been an excellent time to realise gains and sell stakes in unlisted companies. A further £50 million of investments were in the process of being sold at the year end. Electra had rejected several investment opportunities that were too "highly priced", Mr Stoddart said.

The biggest contribution to Electra's gains in the year was a £43 million profit from the sale of Fritidsresor, the Swedish travel agency. As a result, Electra's net asset value per share rose by 5.6 per cent, to 676.15p, in stark contrast to the FTSE all-share and small-cap indices, which fell by 4.5 per cent and 14.9 per cent respectively.

Two thirds of the deals Electra completed were management buyouts (MBOs). The largest was a £29.8 million investment in Deutsche Woolworth, an MBO in which the Woolworth's shops in Germany were bought for £350 million, less than the property's value. Electra also invested £19.2 million in a £53 million MBO of Bezier, the specialist printing spin-off from Wace.

Although the market downturn has cut prices of unlisted transactions, competition between venture capitalists is fierce. Electra is diversifying into Europe and Latin America to find new deals.

Electra is paying a final dividend of 6p, up from 5.2p.

Times, page 30



Michael Stoddart, left, Electra's departing chairman, and Brian Williamson, his successor

US trade deficit for October narrows

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN WASHINGTON

THE US trade deficit narrowed to \$14.2 billion (£8.5 billion) in October from \$14.4 billion in September, the Commerce Department reported yesterday.

The October trade performance was better than expected, as Wall Street analysts had predicted a deficit of \$15.3 billion.

The deficit with Japan was \$6 billion in October, up from \$5.1 billion in September and \$5.8 billion in the same month last year. With China, the October shortfall expanded to \$5.5 billion from \$5.1 billion in September and \$5.2 billion a year earlier. With the European Union, the shortfall rose to \$3.3 billion from \$1.3 billion in September and \$2.3 billion in the same month last year.

Imports rose 2.2 per cent in October to \$93.8 billion, while exports increased 2.8 per cent to \$79.6 billion.

For the first ten months of the year, the trade deficit widened to \$139 billion compared with \$90.4 billion in the same period last year.

The rise in imports in October reflected increases in capital goods and industrial supplies and materials, the Commerce Department said. Exports were pushed higher by agriculture, capital goods, and industrial supplies.

Chase to exceed analysts' forecasts

By KIMBERLY McDONALD

CHASE MANHATTAN, the third-largest US bank, expects to substantially exceed analysts' forecasts for the fourth quarter and may post record profits.

The results are in stark contrast to other financial services companies, the profits of which have been hit hard by tumultuous market conditions in recent months.

Chase said it was benefiting from a better competitive position across the board and was posting strong results in all its business lines.

Wall Street expected Chase to earn \$1.07 per share. However, Walter Shipley, chairman, said: "We're going to have a much better quarter than that, and it could be a record quarter for us."

Chase also said in a regulatory filing that it might earn more than the record \$1.1 billion (£655 million), or \$1.20 per share, in the second quarter of this year.

Questions of Chase's ability to compete effectively without an investment bank have lingered all year. However, analysts said Chase's lack of stock underwriting capabilities and its reliance on traditional commercial banking businesses prevented it from suffering the same fate as other financial services companies when underwriting business dried up in the autumn.

JP Morgan said last week that it would take a charge of \$100 million and gave warning that fourth-quarter profits would be even worse than third-quarter results.

Goldman Sachs also said this week that its fourth-quarter pre-tax profit plunged 81 per cent to \$107 million.

House of Fraser secures cafés facelift

HOUSE OF FRASER, the department stores group, is to get a facelift for its restaurant and café outlets through an £8 million renovation agreement with its catering contractors (Sarah Cunningham writes).

New contracts of seven-and-a-half years have been awarded by HoF to Granada Retail Catering and the privately owned Massarella Catering Group. Massarella, which has run in-store restaurants for HoF

for 18 years, will be responsible for 46 outlets in 30 stores in the Midlands and the South West. It will invest £3.5 million over the next two years. Granada will manage restaurant facilities in HoF's 18

stores in Scotland, London and the South East, covering 27 catering outlets. Granada will invest £4.5 million on the facilities in the next two years and expects the contract to be worth £75 million in turnover.

John Coleman, chief executive of House of Fraser, said: "Our restaurants are a key part of our offer to our customers, and we are determined to ensure that they receive the best possible service."

Former East Midlands chief gets Arriva job

By MANUS COSTELLO

ARRIVA'S six-month search for a chief executive finally came to an end yesterday when the transport group announced the surprise appointment of Bob Davies, former chief executive of East Midlands Electricity.

Mr Davies' appointment was described by one city analyst as "puzzling, given the scope of the task facing Mr Davies is regarded as considerable."

"The company needs something to catalyse it after last week's failure to sell its car leasing business. A radical management shake up is needed," said one investor.

"They are both mass market, service industries, which involve regulation, attention to high-quality customer service and the need to offer value for money," Mr Davies said.

He added that his goal was to "take a hold of the business and develop more shareholder value".

Arriva has been seeking a new chief executive since July, when Gordon Hodgson announced his intention to retire. Michael Gwillt, managing



Davies' surprise appointment

Eustace to leave Philips in the spring

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY EUSTACE, the Englishman who was tipped for the top job at Philips, the electronics company, is to leave the firm next spring.

Mr Eustace, 62, a former finance director of British Aerospace, joined Philips six years ago at a low point in the Dutch group's fortunes as chief financial officer. Yesterday the company announced that he is to step down as vice-chairman of the company from April 1.

Philips said Mr Eustace had played an important role in improving the financial situation of the company since he joined in 1992. It added that since his appointment as vice-chairman two years ago, he had been instrumental in restructuring the governance of the company and in establishing regional headquarters around the world.

Philips said that the regional headquarters for Western Europe, in Eindhoven, will be operational from March 15. The move is part of the company's policy of having regional executive offices playing a more important role in getting the Philips brand into the marketplace. Regional headquarters have been established in Singapore, São Paulo, Dubai, New York and Prague.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER

Visit the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao — three nights from £299



Today The Times offers readers a superb short break to Bilbao, Spain's fourth largest city and now home of the new Guggenheim Museum which opened last year. American architect, Frank Gehry, was commissioned to create "the most important building of this century".

Many people are already labelling the shimmering structure the eighth wonder of the world. With the Basque country's emerald hills as a backdrop, the unique titanium and limestone building can be seen for miles around. Inside, there are three floors and 18 galleries filled with masterpieces representing almost every genre of modern art.

As well as enjoying the paintings, you will delight in the bustling city of Bilbao, one of Europe's busiest ports, where there are many restaurants, excellent shops and pavement cafés.

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Independent plans restructure

By RAYMOND SNOODY
MEDIA EDITOR

INDEPENDENT Newspapers, the international newspaper group based in the Republic of Ireland and headed by Tony O'Reilly, said yesterday it had embarked on a fundamental restructuring plan that would cost the company £138.5 million (£34 million).

Liam Healy, chief executive of the group whose titles include the Irish Independent and The Independent, the UK newspaper it bought from Mirror Group earlier this

year, said a "substantial part" of the restructuring charge would be in redundancy costs.

The restructuring, which will mainly affect the group's activities in South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, will not have an impact on the 1998 results, the company said.

The exceptional provision will, however, be more than offset by the exceptional profit the company has made from the £59 million sale of Sirocco, its outdoor advertising business in France.

Mr Healy said a trading downturn, particularly in the

southern hemisphere, was a good time to look "at the way you do business".

The company, with the help of Booz-Allen & Hamilton, the consultants, has been looking at everything from modernising production operations and moving to more efficient work practices to streamlining advertising, circulation and distribution.

In New Zealand, for example, Independent is expected to take over responsibility for its own distribution.

Mr Healy declined to give details about the extent of any job losses, although the group

expects the restructuring to generate savings of more than £90 million over the next five years.

The group has also negotiated an increased bank facility — up from £280 million to £380 million — with a view to looking at further acquisitions.

The group is also finalising plans to build a new printing plant on a greenfield site to complement its existing Dublin printing plant.

Analysts expect Independent Newspapers to produce pre-tax profits of about £75 million in the current year.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Main table containing unit trust prices for various funds, including columns for fund names, unit prices, and percentage changes. Funds listed include ASSET MANAGEMENT, EQUITY, FIXED INCOME, and SPECIALIST.

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From one v... IN THE ARTS... W... Advertisement for a book or publication, featuring a portrait of a man and promotional text.



POP

THE TIMES ARTS

THEATRE
Dick Barton: special agent rides again
PAGE 38



From euphoria to Viagra in one wacky year

YEAR IN THE ARTS
RICHARD MORRISON

What was that wacky phrase coined by Tony Blair? We were told us this year, in the "post-euphoria pre-delivery" stage of his Government's life. Well, in the arts in 1998 euphoria sometimes seemed as distant as the first night of *The Mousetrap*, while delivery appeared as imminent as an England Test match win.

Doom-laden cultural sagas — the Royal Opera House, the Arts Council, the Dome, the lottery — rolled onwards like Norse epics: timeless, tragicomic, and utterly impervious to the guiles of Man or Management Consultants. Whole casts of important people strutted and fretted their hour upon the stage, promised great reforms, and then disappeared. Ministers announced "sweeping changes" and then, to hide the deafening silence of the subsequent inertia, announced them all over again.

Post-euphoria? You bet. Pre-delivery? You wish. For instance, is the Royal Opera House finally "sorted"? You would be forgiven a certain scepticism. In 1998 it lost yet another chief executive. Its new chairman launched his reign with a spectacular faux pas about not wanting "smelly trainers" in his theatre. And its stand-in chief executive crowned his interregnum with an even dafter remark about education work being "nothing more than lip service".

To cap it all, the ROH decided that, to cut costs, its output in 1999 would amount to precisely zero. Too late it then recalled that it was contracted to perform 21 weeks at the new Sadler's Wells, and had to pay £135 million in compensation. Now it thinks it might play at Sadler's Wells after all — but still pay the compensation. If you follow this logic, do give me a ring.



Class of '98 (clockwise from top left): *Angel of the North*; Nicole Kidman and Iain Glen in *The Blue Room*; big bodies in the Dome; and Chumbawamba, perpetrators of a watery outrage on the Deputy Prime Minister at the Brits



A catalogue of disaster, then. And yet... call me a cockeyed optimist, or simply drunk... but I detect a turning of a corner. Covent Garden is now run by Michael Kaiser, a smart American who oozes positivity. Restrictive practices have allegedly been swept away. "Access" is said to be paramount in every plan.

It could be another false dawn — and yesterday's announcement of a £5 million increase in the opera house's subsidy will do nothing to appease people who hate to see serial incompetence rewarded. But in 12 months the new Covent Garden must open. The nation has invested a fortune in it. If we dwell any longer on past failure, we risk screwing up the future as well.

status of a government poodle, headed by a fully paid-up Labour tycoon — Gerry Robinson, the £800,000-a-year boss of Granada. His first speech about the arts achieved a remarkable double: it alienated not only the middle-class punters who keep the arts going, but many performing organisations as well. Quite a debut.

Indeed, the Government's perceived bias against the "serious" arts — as opposed to its star-struck slobbering over the "creative industries" of film, pop and fashion — was the other talking-point of 1998. Formidable figures frothed in vain. Simon Rattle accused the Government of having "a fear of anything that could be considered high culture". George Steiner declared that Labour had a "vengeful" dislike of classical music. John Tusa focused the attack directly on Blair: "The arts do not matter to him because they are a marginal side of his own experience."



The Government protested that it loved the arts dearly — but the evidence stacked up against it. While theatres and orchestras tottered towards bankruptcy, £750 million of lottery money was frittered away on banal necessities at the Greenwich Dome, where you will soon be able to walk through the bowels of a large statue, or float into a psychedelic cave on a rubber bed. And while the Prime Minister entertained pop stars in Downing Street, his Education Secretary was busy cutting music out of the primary curriculum. The sad spectacle of middle-

ment was Anthony Payne's, for completing Elgar's Third Symphony in fine style. The fact that Elgar forbade anyone to "tinker" with the sketches worried nobody except a few old fuddy-duddies like me.

The sweet-and-sour prize for 1998 must go to the film director James Cameron. Ridiculed for spending \$200 million on a film called *Titanic*, he saw the movie recoup eight times that amount at the box office, and sweep the Oscars. Unfortunately, Cameron then felt the need to demand the "impeachment" of the *Los Angeles Times*'s critic Kenneth Turan, because Turan had dared to point out flaws in the film. The director's year ended badly, too: his wife filed for divorce. Asked whether the phenomenal success of *Titanic* had changed her husband, she replied: "He was always a jerk, so there's no way to measure."



MASSIVE ATTACK
MEZZANOTTE
A MAGAZINE ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Some events in 1998 defied prophecy. Kensington and Chelsea council actually approved the "crumpled boxes" of Daniel Libeskind's V&A extension. The new British Library actually opened — only 20 years late. And the Royal Court Theatre, home to generations of left-wing dramatists, will henceforth bear the name of a deceased pearl trader — John Jerwood, whose Liechtenstein-registered Foundation has suddenly and mysteriously become one of the biggest players on the cultural scene.

On the other hand, a man who paints an elephant dung won the Turner Prize. Some things are all too predictable.

INTERVIEW

Jane McDonald on top

The day Jane's ship came in

If Jane McDonald's single tops the Christmas singles chart, she's got her strange grandmother to thank

Since Alberta 'The Yo-Yo Girl's' single sadly took a nose-dive, there have been only three viable pugilists for the Christmas No 1 slot. The 5-1 favourite is the Spice Girls' *Goodbye*, with its impenetrable video set in a mansion full of frozen people. Second is Denise Van Outen and Johnny Vaughan's *Especially For You* at 9-1, which is fair enough, really. It's for charity, and all that. The third contender is Jane McDonald's *Cruising Into Christmas*, chalked up by William Hill at 10-1.



CAITLIN MORAN

Don't look blank — you know Jane McDonald. The cabaret singer from that BBC docu-soap, *The Cruise*. The thirty-something Yorkshire woman with a voice "like a clutch". The one whose debut album went straight in at No 1 during the summer.

"It's been a shocking year, really," McDonald, 10-1, says, sitting regally on a hugely overstuffed sofa. Her Yorks burr is cosy but brisk. "Meteoritic is the word, isn't it?" Her June wedding — to Henrik, who is now head of her security — was watched by 13 million people. "Ten million watched it, and three million taped it," she adds. This despite it being on opposite the World Cup. "The men sat downstairs, watching their football on their big tellys; and the women were in the bedroom, watching me on the little tellys," she vignettes beautifully.

The album — cabaret standards — was released the day afterwards: and the fan club launched a month later. There's a wide range of Jane McDonald merchandising: keyrings, T-shirts, calendars, mugs. Her fans are "nine to

ninety", and insatiable for all things Jane. "A lot of people are living through me at the moment," she says, pleasantly. "Which is nice." But of course, it couldn't be. And you don't believe she means it.

She's bright and warm, but before *The Cruise* she had, as she frequently reminds, done the clubs for 15 years; and this has left her glummy but tough: hard — like hair-lacquered. So when she started receiving a hundred letters a day, one can imagine her rather bemused response. When she says: "We'd all sit down and go 'Ohhh, listen to this one,'" she doesn't mean it to sound as if she opened up a bag of mail and laughed for 14 hours straight — but it does.

Her fans became quite hysterical and tearful on her last tour: her husband sticks close by her, "because my fans want to get to me — BLESS THEM — so we do need security". Each venue she played was swamped with teddies, chocolates, flowers and champagne. "We're kitted out for Christmas," she says brightly.

McDonald sounds an odd child: nervy, jumpy and over-anxious. The family never went on holiday because she would be "literally sick with nerves" at the upheaval. Her first word, before Mummy or Daddy, was "Downtown" — Petula Clark's hit was wall-to-wall on the radio, and she adored it.

It was her form and music teacher, Mrs Brierly, who coaxed McDonald out of herself. She'd say: "Jane, can you take the class, I'm just going to see the headmaster," and



Cruising to a bruising: Jane McDonald in the TV docu-soap that shot her to fame — but brought security problems

leave McDonald to play piano and take the class's music lesson. "And she didn't have to see the headmaster at all — she was standing outside," McDonald marvels. "She made me." McDonald's grandmother was a psychic. Every week, she and Jane's mother would be off to their spiritualist meetings, which McDonald and her father considered "right daff", and eschewed in favour of the bingo. It was her grand-

mother who ensured her current job, though: McDonald was booked to sing on another ship until her grandmother stepped in, and insisted she wait for "a ship with a big blue cross on it". This is the *Galaxy*, and the rest is all platinum album and scary fans.

Sipping at her tea, she explains her next move is putting together a light entertainment show for TV: something that caters for the audience TV executives think themselves too cool to programme for. It will be old-fashioned music, dance, guests and chat, as McDonald loves the "real women entertainers" of the Sixties: Petula Clark, Dusty Springfield, Shirley Bassey, Barbra Streisand, Cilla Black.

Of course, as McDonald gained her fame from regular candid docu-contact with her fans, this move away from them and into light entertainment could be a bad move. But she has her psychic, Steve, on the case, and presumably he'd warn her. And as for Steve's prediction for her single, well, McDonald claims she hasn't asked him: but from the look on her face, I think she did, and he told her she wouldn't be No 1. But No 2 isn't bad for the nervy girl from Yorks with the voice like a clutch.

ARTS

POP ALBUMS

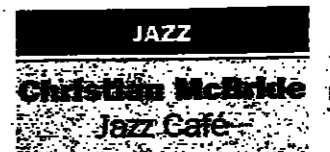
Hip hop in the doldrums

Funks a lot to the ace of bass

Christian McBride's latest album, *A Family Affair*, leaves no room for doubt as to his dual allegiance to jazz and funk. In addition to the relatively straightforward material upon which his virtuosic acoustic playing vindicates his reputation as the jazz bassist of his generation (he's 26), there is a fair amount of music characterised by McBride as "about getting right down to it, feeling good".

McBride himself is conscious that such a clear stylistic split can be unsettling — his recently stated aim is "to get to the point where I can use them both together" — so his use of acoustic bass on his quarter's first number, the aforementioned Sly Stone funk-rock classic, was intriguing. Ironically, however, jazz — even down to a John Coltrane quote from tenor player Tim Warfield in the coda — was very much in the ascendant in this lengthy opener with its infectious cantering rhythm, and McBride even used his stand-up bass to imitate Stone's sturred, half-spoken vocals.

The quartet's next two selections were also in contemporary jazz mode. *Egad* (its title an anagram of the notes employed in its bass line) built from attractively wispy beginnings to a rolling climax with drummer Rodney Green ham-



CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE

mering out the polyrhythms a la Elvin Jones. *Sitting on a Cloud* began with an arco bass introduction to a tripping tenor theme before settling into another intense jazz workout anchored by McBride's lithe, booming bass. For the Spinners' *I'm Coming Home*, though, things got a little funkier courtesy of Sherrick Mitchell's sparkling electric piano.

From here, things got seriously funky. Stevie Wonder's *Summersoft*, despite proving, in its occasional awkwardness, that much pop material does not lend itself easily to extended instrumental exploration, certainly awakened both band and crowd to the delights of the heavy backbeat. *Freedom Jazz Dance* continued in even funkier vein and the closing original, *Brown Funk* — featuring a third bass, this time a five-string suitable for "hammering" — was dedicated to McBride's mentor Ray Brown, but was clearly inspired by the music of his namesake James.

CHRIS PARKER

Funny rhythms

DO JAZZ musicians have a sense of humour? Very much so, although you could be forgiven for thinking otherwise as most of the jazz press excludes all the levity of an undertaker's house journal. Snappy one-liners have never been in short supply, and there is an anarchic tradition, too. Don't forget that Spike Milligan played in a band, and it is surely no coincidence that the funniest programme on radio, *I'm Sorry, I Haven't a Clue*, is presented by Humphrey Lytton.

As its name suggests, Bob Kerr's Whoopie Band belongs at the wilder end of the spectrum, purveying the brand of madcap comedy that used to be the speciality of the American bandleader Spike Jones. Some readers may recall seeing Kerr's original line-up rubbing shoulders with the Borzoi Dog Doo-Dah Band many years ago, and the band's residency — which runs to Boxing Day — forms a cheeky alternative to George Melly's louche festive party at Ronnie Scott's.

Silly hats, flying goggles, car horns, clown masks, pictures of Popeye and Olive Oyl — the gags and visual puns come hurtling out at a terrific



BOB KERR

rate. If you miss one, another will be along in a second or two. The cascade is intricately choreographed. Just as importantly the music, a mixture of trad and swing, is delivered with great aplomb by the quintet. Kerr switching between cornet, tuba and other instruments besides, while the other frontman, the enigmatically named Professor Percival, juggles his own private arsenal.

I Can't Give You Anything But Love receives a thorough mangling from Percival, re-emerging as *I Can't Give You Anything But Babies, Love*. The old stand-by *When the Saints Go Marching In* comes in a handbell arrangement with a rogue F wandering around in its midst.

The solid musical values are underlined by the pianist Spike Bottorill, who thunders out the opening of the *Crig* piano concerto before detouring into *Air On A G String* and some furious stride choruses.

CLIVE DAVIS

Raps missing a consonant

BUSTA RHYMES
Extinction Level Event
★ *The Final World From*
(Elektra 7559-62211)

REDMAN
Doc's Da Name 2000
(Def Jam/Mercury 558 945)

REVIEWING records has its ups and downs. But rarely have I suffered a period of such sustained torpor as that induced by listening to the deluge of American hip hop albums to have come down the pipeline in the past five weeks.

One after another they have arrived bearing pictures of scowling hardmen with names like comic book villains — Method Man, RZA, Timbaland, Geto Boys, DJ Clue, Ice Cube et al — their sleek artwork incorporating the inevitable "Parental Advisory Explicit Content" logo which has become the rappers' kite mark.

Busta Rhymes, whose third album, *Extinction Level Event*, joins the others in my rejects box this week, does at least have a well-developed sense of humour. In one spoken interlude a youth tries to explain the appeal of a track called *Just Give It to Me Raw* to his irredeemably unhip parents: "It's about this street bitch who does some scandalous-ass **** with this dude, but he still wants to mess with her. Trust me, you'll like it," he says. "I'm all ears," the father replies, drily. Well, me too.

Actually, Rhymes is one of the brighter exponents of hip hop, with the ability to move smoothly between soul, funk and rock idioms and the nous to leaven his declarations of impending global catastrophe with a sense of the absurd.

Redman, better known to his mother as Reggie Noble, is less adroit. His album, *Doc's Da Name 2000*, is a celebration of the cartoon gangster lifestyle in which the usual clichés abound: sounds of gunfire, car tyres screeching, radio idents between tracks. The poverty of language is more than a match for the dearth of musical ideas and despite his attempts at black humour, there is little to smile about.

In a skit entitled *Pain in da Ass Stewardess*, Reggie reacts badly to being told to put on his seatbelt and fold up his tray. Indeed, such is his ire, that he shoots the pilot and then opens fire on the other passengers. It must be the way he tells them.

MIKE HENDERSON & THE BLUEBLOODS
Thicker Than Water
(Direct Reckoning/ Direct DEAR 0012)

A SLIDE guitarist and harmonica player with a voice redolent of the late Stevie Ray Vaughan, Mike Henderson brings a sure touch to a rag-

ged selection of songs of the sort that Peter Green and Eric Clapton used to play so well when they were in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

Mister Dumbchild is a mournful rumble in *Black Magic Woman* vein; *All My Money's Gone* a searing sequence of harmonica riffs strung around an old-school hard-luck lyric: "I can't be the life of the party 'cause all my money's gone."

The Bluebloods bring a rare sense of adventure to the arrangements, although there are too many tracks, such as *Slow Your Motor Down* and *Uranium Rock*, with unduly fussy rhythmic quirks. The boogie piano of John Jarvis is a constant delight, and when they hit their stride on the bar-reelhouse shuffles of *Wouldn't Lay My Guitar Down* and *Scared of that Child*, you get a rare glimpse of 12-bar heaven.

NEW POP ALBUMS

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Worlds Collide: Global Remixes/Original Versions
(EMI 7243 4 97961; two discs)

HERE'S a neat idea. On one disc you get original recordings by artists from countries such as South Africa (Shanghuwe Black Tycoons), Brazil (Djavan), Israel (Yosefa) and Chile (Inti Illimani). On the other disc is a corresponding selection of dance remixes of the same tracks by such world music connoisseurs as Loop Guru, Jah Wobble and Transglobal Underground.

Besides closing the circle at the point where the most traditional and modern expressions of musical creativity meet, the package underlines the way in which modern dance music embraces — some might say plunders — the music of the globe, using various ethnic styles as flavouring for the simmering rhythmic stew.

DAVID SINCLAIR



Best of a baad lot: hip hop's Busta Rhymes at least manages to inject some humour into his antisocial diatribes

MILES DAVIS
The Complete Bluebird Sessions
(Columbia C4K 65570 — four CDs)

JOHN COLTRANE
The Classic Quartet — Complete Impulse! Studio Recordings
(Impulse! IMPD8-280 — eight CDs)

FOR those who have heard nothing of either Miles Davis's most celebrated foray into seeking electronics or the uniquely passionate music produced by John Coltrane between 1961 and 1965, these two boxed sets will go a long way towards explaining just why their subjects are still the most influential and respected innovators in, respectively, jazz-rock and post-

Perfect essence in a box

NEW JAZZ ALBUMS

bop acoustic jazz. For those already familiar with much of the albums' material, both the completeness and the tidy chronological arrangement of the sets will throw valuable new light on some of jazz's greatest recordings.

The *Bluebird* sessions (August 1969-February 1970), involving the cream of the nascent jazz-rock movement — Herbie Hancock, Chick Co-

ltrane's inner-directed, earnest journey towards purity and spirituality in music — perfectly documented in his set — provides a fascinating contrast to Davis's restless hip, multi-directional musical questings. Whether they are caressing a show tune, praying their way through *A Love Supreme* or indulging in the most tumultuous free improvisation, the justifiably named "classic" quartet still provide the benchmark for both sensitivity and fierce interaction in small-group jazz.

Sumptuously packaged, painstakingly annotated and with studio chat and false starts cut to a minimum, these are indispensable sets.

CHRIS PARKER

Across the Bridge of Hope

An album in aid of the Omagh Fund

Liam Neeson | Sinéad O'Connor
The Divine Comedy | Boyzone | The Corrs
Daniel O'Donnell | Van Morrison | Ash | U2
Juliet Turner | Paul Brady
Omagh Community Youth Choir | Enya

CD/MC AVAILABLE NOW

In the aftermath of the Omagh tragedy on the 15th of August, 1998, this album embodies the hope for peace and reconciliation throughout Ireland and beyond. It is a collective statement of sympathy for all of those who have suffered as a result of the long history of conflict in Northern Ireland.

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SPOTLIGHT because!

WY

David Sinclair

The

Get me

SPOTLIGHT ON 1998
No cause for celebration

ARTS

TOMORROW
Nights out in Metro

When Britpop died for the Corrs

David Sinclair looks back at 1998, when the only thing pop knew for sure was that it could take nothing for granted

I always looked as though a shaky year was in prospect, but things really turned sour in June. Over a ten-day period, the Phoenix Festival was cancelled because of poor ticket sales, the A&M record label was folded up by its parent company, PolyGram, and the music weekly *NME* ran an eight-page special suggesting that rock'n'roll was in its death throes, again.

Adding his formidable voice to the chorus of alarm was Alan McGee, the boss of Creation Records, who predicted that advances in Internet technology would soon render record companies obsolete.

His argument was bolstered a few weeks later when Creation sacked almost a third of its workforce. June was a watershed in other ways. Embrace sailed to the top of the chart with their debut album, *The Good Will Out*, which sold 43,000 copies in its first week of release. Amid all the ballyhoo, little attention was paid to the fact that in the same week the Corrs' second album, *Talk On Corners*, which had been in the chart all year, quietly sold another 30,000 copies, taking its total sales beyond the 300,000 mark required to qualify for a platinum disc.

The difference between the Corrs and Embrace and the eventual fortunes of their albums pretty well summed up the changes that were afoot in 1998. Embrace were the last Britpop gang in town. Having self-consciously aped Oasis and the Verve in their personal mannerisms, songwriting style and album artwork, Embrace found the weekly music press only too willing to collude in a carefully orchestrated campaign to promote them as the new saviours of English rock'n'roll. But, as the year went on, their star gradually waned, and although the album hung around the lower reaches of the chart for several months it never caught fire.

With their mixture of American soft-rock and Irish folk influences,

the Corrs could not have been less in tune either musically or philosophically with the vainglorious attitude of the bands that roamed the charts during the Britpop era. But as their record persisted in the Top Ten (climbing again this week to No 2), and eventually became the biggest selling album of the year, they became fashionable in a way that would previously have been unthinkable. They will never be staples of *NME*, but the Corrs have now become the first act whose appeal has crossed over from the older Q-buying market to the teen readership of *Smash Hits*, and not the other way around.

'A move away from alternative rock was evident'

While "credible" groups which flourished, such as Manic Street Preachers, Garbage and Catatonia, were something of an exception in 1998, pure pop was king — or perhaps that should be queen. In the wake of the Spice Girls, All Saints and Aqua, a succession of female-dominated acts — Billie, B*Witched, Steps — took up residence in the charts, alongside male confreres such as Boyzone, Five and Another Level. Similarly, the solo artists who prevailed — Cher, Robbie Williams, Natalie Imbruglia, Madonna — were all pop thoroughbreds, if sometimes of a surprisingly ancient vintage.

As traditional pop rushed in to fill the vacuum left by the lack of any new creative trends, the move away from alternative and indie-based rock was evident across the board. Radio 1 quickly embraced the poppastic sounds of Honeyz and Cleopatra, while Radio 2, which now commanded the largest listening figures of any station in Britain, grooved to Lighthouse Family and Ace of Base. Meanwhile, XFM, London's much vaunted alternative radio station and the last bastion of the indie-rock aesthetic, was taken over by Capital Radio and systematically filled with all its specialist pro-



The Corrs have become the first act whose appeal has crossed over from the older Q-buying market to the teen readership of *Smash Hits*, and not the other way around

grammes. Sales of *Top of the Pops* magazine, a spin-off from the TV programme, launched less than two years ago, passed half-a-million. And even before Celine Dion had put out her Christmas album, *These Are Special Times*, it was revealed that the Canadian middle-of-the-road diva was selling a disc, somewhere in the world, every 1.2 seconds.

Apart from any aesthetic consideration, the trouble with pop groups from a record industry standpoint is that they are expensive to launch and notoriously difficult to establish on a long-term basis (pace the Spice Girls, who enjoyed another phenomenal year despite the departure of Geri Halliwell). In terms of the cliché which describes the music world as a jungle, it has traditionally been the role of pop groups to form the tangled, constantly regenerating undergrowth, while their more mature rock cousins rise upwards to scale ever greater heights over the long term.

But there is now evidence to suggest that, as in the jungle, there is room for only a finite number of tall trees, and the limit is close to being reached. A survey in America

found that a large proportion of younger music fans failed even to comprehend why they should want to buy a second album by the same group in preference to something by a completely different act. In Britain, the disappointing sales of strong new albums by Pulp, Ash, Hole and Mansun, to name a few, would seem to bear this out.

Reinforcing this trend in 1998 was the baleful influence of the many Greatest Hits compilations in the album chart, especially at this time of year. As singles become increasingly costly to market in their own right, these compilations

of former hit singles, which used to be the icing on the cake, have increasingly become the bread and butter for record company and artist alike. George Michael's position at the top of the album chart over the past six weeks with *Ladies & Gentlemen — The Best Of* is merely the tip of an ever-swelling iceberg.

Such albums represent good value to the consumer and one hesitates to condemn them out of hand. But they are now so numerous that the number of berths available in the chart for new albums has become drastically reduced, especial-

ly during the vital last quarter of the year when anything up to 40 per cent of the industry's annual turnover occurs. The upshot is an ever smaller window of opportunity for the sort of acts that will provide the Greatest Hits compilations of the future. If established heavyweights such as R. Kelly and Whitney Houston are struggling to make a mark with new albums, then what hope is there for artists such as Placebo, Faithless or P.J. Harvey to get a proper hearing on the big stage? Looks like it's time to go underground again.

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LISTINGS Carmen in Leeds

ARTS

CONCERT MacGregor at the QEH

Born to play brilliant Bach

Anyone who imagined that Hilary Hahn was simply another bright young violinist being pushed by the music business would have been confounded here. Her fresh, innocent-looking appearance belies the fact that she is a serious musician...

CONCERTS

She immediately established the very different mood of Brahms's Sonata No 3 in D minor, bringing out all its lyrical warmth. The rhapsodic first movement and bitter-sweet Adagio were both truly Brahmsian...

JOHN ALLISON

Be prepared

The day the music died really is a very, very long way off yet. That conviction was borne out by Joanna MacGregor's remarkable Perilous Night on the South Bank on Tuesday...

The two customised grand pianos nudged each other on stage. One, for the Sonatas, had been rigged with screws and bolts to create a palette of sounds akin to the timbres of the Indonesian gamelan...

HILARY FINCH



Devil of a job: Andrew C. Wadsworth stops saving the world long enough to admire the charms of Kate Graham

Dick to the rescue

Here is a name and a job description to roll back the years for anyone who was a youngster in Atlee's Britain. Every weekday evening at 6.45pm the streets emptied, recreation grounds fell silent and a nation held its breath as the galloping signature tune heralded another 15 minutes in which the fearless Briton - well, Englishman - did battle with a host of villains...

THEATRE Dick Barton Special Agent Warehouse, Croydon

played cricket commentator, has turned the tables on Skarheart and his evil crew, who are next seen breaking rocks on Dartmoor. Cue for close-horned foursome in fetching outfits of prison grey...

contical mischief wits somewhat, but much of the time I became weak with laughter at the enjoyable silliness of it all. Wadsworth evidently relishes the chance to send up the sort of strong-voiced hero he normally plays straight, and Kate Graham is a real find, doubling husky-voiced Mata and glass-voiced Daphne...

JEREMY KINGSTON

JOHN ALLISON

ing drumming of Cage's own Bachanale, in MacGregor's virtuoso performance, resonated on into Deirdre Gribbin's The Broken Piece of the Moon...

Each of MacGregor's new works was for prepared piano, with an electro-acoustic element. First came her great soulmate, Django Bates, and a winsome little piece called You Live and Learn, in which his nine-year-old daughter recites a witty little parable of life...

NIGEL CLIFF

THE PRIMITIVE AND EXHILARATING

Master criminals never learn. Scarcely have the curtains closed on this cliff-hanger than Andrew C. Wadsworth's Dick, talking in the gruff, bluff tones of a consti-

Of course there are sections where the

HERE'S an unlikely thing: an uplifting family musical based on a disturbing medieval Jewish myth, performed by a cast of 13 and a three-man band, all showcased on to a tiny stage. Full marks for effort...

Monster mash

need for unity against oppression: the resilience of the human spirit. The story is book-ended with scenes from Prague's 1989 Velvet Revolution. We can still draw inspiration from old tales, the writer Sylvia Freedman implies...

The Legendary Golem

aspors, sports the refrain "Travelling light, travelling light" sung to a sort of blankety-blank tune. But plot mishmash and portentous pretensions aside, there is much to like here. The director Brennan Street battles gamely with the limitations of the space, shaping a vigorously fluid variety of

THE PRIMITIVE AND EXHILARATING

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THE PRIMITIVE AND EXHILARATING

THE PRIMITIVE AND EXHILARATING

RECOMMENDED THIS WEEKEND

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marit Hargie

LONDON CANDIDE. Ken Nagano conducts the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in two concert performances of Baroque's comic opera. Cantele, Scolaia include June Anderson, Thomas Allen and Patricia Routledge...

ELSEWHERE EDINBURGH. Frederick Ashton's lively production of La Fille mal gresee returns to Scottish Ballet's Christmas repertoire with the lovely Yumi Shimura in the principal role...

Patricia Routledge sings in a Barbican Candide

NEW WEST END SHOWS

- Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London
CHICAGO. Mena Freeman injects new blood into the hit revival of Kander and Ebb's musical about murder and love.
DICK BARTON SPECIAL AGENT. Journey back to the 1940s with the famous old radio thriller...

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

- Geoff Brown's choice of the latest movies
THE PRINCE OF EGYPT. Splendid animation, but there's not much for adults in the biblical story of Moses leading the Israelites to the promised land.
BASE: PIG IN THE CITY. Everyone's favourite talking pig faces the horrors of the hostile city.

ART GALLERIES

- FAREWELL TO MOTOCOMBI ST TO 18th Dec. Catalogue available at the Michael Perkin Gallery.
THE NUTCRACKER. Dec 15-Jan 4, Jan 9-23. Michael Perkin Gallery.

THEATRES

Advertisement for Charles and Diana at the Cambridge Theatre. "No ifs or buts - this is the funniest show in the West End".

THEATRES

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Limits of forensic immunity from suit

Arthur J. S. Hall & Co (a firm) v Simons
Barratt v Woolf Seddon (a firm)
Cotton v Atkinson Dacre & Slack (a firm)
Harris v Schofield Roberts & Hill (a firm)

Before Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, Lord Justice Morritt and Lord Justice Waller (Judgment December 14)

The court would not, without substantial grounds, sanction the initiation of satellite proceedings against legal advisers who had advised clients to settle.

Later proceedings which constituted a collateral attack on a consent judgment approved by the court would ordinarily be struck out as an abuse of process unless the plaintiff could properly allege a breach of duty which had deprived him of a reasonable opportunity of appreciating the availability of better terms or had placed him in a significantly less advantageous position.

her negligence action against them in respect of a settlement approved by the court in matrimonial ancillary relief proceedings.

Mr Rupert Jackson, QC and Mr Christopher Critchlow for Atkinson Dacre & Slack; Mr Cottonbone in person; Mr Jeffrey Bacon for Schofield Roberts & Hill; Mr Peter Duckworth and Mr Nicholas Bowen for Mrs Harris.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE, giving the judgment of the court, said that in the four appeals the following questions arose: 1 To what extent and in what circumstances did a lawyer's immunity from suit in relation to allegedly negligent conduct of a case in court protect him from claims for allegedly negligent acts and omissions taking place out of court?

2 Did a lawyer if not otherwise immune from a claim in negligence by a client become so when the court approved a consent order in any proceedings, but particularly in matrimonial proceedings for ancillary relief?

3 Since such immunity derogated from the fundamental principle that a professional person was answerable to his client for loss caused through want of the skill and care ordinarily to be expected, the scope of the immunity was to be restricted to cases where public policy grounds called for its recognition.

4 While such immunity extended beyond the limits set out in 1 above, it applied only "in relation to the conduct of the case in court that it can fairly be said to be a preliminary decision affecting the way that cause is to be conducted when it comes to a hearing" (see *Rees v Stoddart*).

His Lordship said that the House of Lords might therefore choose to review and modify the rulings and the European Court of Human Rights might be called on to consider the compatibility of *Rondel v Worsley* with the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 1950 (ECHR 1950).

Did it matter when and where the advice was given and whether the lawyer was acting as an advocate or in the role which solicitors had traditionally filled when instructing counsel?

While the House of Lords would have accepted a pre-trial decision by an advocate, that a certain claimant should not pursue a particular professional ground was advanced or pleaded, as similarly protected, the majority would not have favoured a comprehensive or definitive approach to whether pre-trial work of a given kind should attract immunity: see *Saif Ali* at p219.

Thus when any advocate claimed to be immune in respect of any specific act or omission it was necessary to test that claim by reference to the particular act or omission and to examine the public policy grounds which might be relied on to support the recognition of immunity in that instance.

There was nothing in those cases to suggest that anyone was immune in relation to anything done, or omitted, out of court if he would not have been immune in relation to the same thing done, or omitted, in court.

Further, those authorities stressed that the immunity was that of an advocate: that a solicitor or any other qualified advocate might be immune.

particularity where it had specifically approved the terms of the order. Disposal of proceedings without a full hearing.

The compromise of proceedings might involve any one of many different procedures. Adult parties of sound mind might ordinarily settle proceedings by an agreement made wholly out of court.

He said that a party who had consented to an order was not precluded from seeking to challenge or set it aside where fraud, misrepresentation, non-disclosure or a fundamental change of circumstance had occurred. But substantial grounds for a challenge had to be shown.

Judges relied on practitioners' help, but the court had an overriding duty to survey the sufficiency of the proposed consideration and the overall fairness of the orders proposed: see *Peacock v Peacock* (1994) 1 FLR 324, 329.

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His Lordship, having referred to the cases since *Rondel v Worsley* where lawyers had both successfully and unsuccessfully claimed forensic immunity, and to cases where the *Hunter* principle had been applied in claims against both lawyers and non-lawyers, said that in the light of *Hunter* the first question to be asked was whether the claim represented an abusive collateral challenge to an earlier decision of the court.

If it did it should be struck out on an earlier decision of the court. If it did not it should be struck out on the particular facts there were grounds for not following that course. That principle clearly applied to claims against lawyers whether acting as advocates or not.

It was always necessary to consider with care: (i) the nature and effect of the claim made in the later proceedings and (ii) any grounds relied on to justify the collateral challenge, if found to be such.

be met to justify a collateral challenge to it would be less stringent. But such judgments and orders were not to be ignored because the full *Hunter* test was not satisfied. They involved an exercise of judicial authority embodied in an enforceable court order and were not to be lightly disregarded.

At the very least, it would be incumbent on a party seeking to mount a collateral challenge to such an order to explain why steps were not taken to set it aside or challenge it in the original proceedings.

If that threshold was crossed the *Hunter* test had to be adapted appropriately to the particular case, bearing in mind that the fundamental issue was one of abuse.

The initiation of proceedings against legal advisers which involved a collateral attack on a consent judgment approved by the court in previous proceedings might and ordinarily would be an abuse of process unless the plaintiff could properly allege a breach of duty which either: 1 Deprived him of a reasonable opportunity of appreciating that better terms were available whether on settlement or on a contested hearing than he obtained, or 2 Placed him in the position of having to accept a settlement significantly less advantageous or more disadvantageous than he should have had.

be similarly protected if made out of court before trial. It could not however be accepted that a similar immunity should attach to allegedly negligent decisions made out of court on, for example, the legal strength or weakness of a claim or the legal admissibility of evidence, or the appropriateness of a claim.

There could therefore be no general rule that counsel was not immune from liability in advising his client that his case should be settled. Nor could it be safely said that such advice given at the door of the court on the hearing day, or even during the hearing, was necessarily immune and advice given at an earlier stage was not.

All had to depend on the advice given, the reason for it and the complaint made about it. Advice based on an advocate's assessment of the strength of the evidence or the likelihood of a finding of contributory negligence might be one thing. Advice based on a palpable error of law or deficient research might be quite another.

Any doubt as to the advice in question, and whenever and wherever given, the basic question had always to be whether public policy required the recognition of immunity in the particular case. Any doubt was to be resolved against the grant of forensic immunity, since such immunity derogated from a fundamental principle and the law should be slow to grant its own practitioners a protection denied to members of other professions.

Description cannot be trade mark

In re Trade Mark No 2,023,949
Before Mr Justice Laddie (Judgment December 4)

A sign which overwhelmingly performed a descriptive or technical function could not validly be registered as a trade mark.

Mr Justice Laddie so held in the Chancery Division, in declining on an application by Smithkline Beecham plc ("SKB"), that the mark "Jeryl Lynn", registered as a trade mark in Class 5 in the name of Merck and Co Inc, pursuant to an application dated June 14, 1995, had been invalidly registered.

Section 1 of the Trade Marks Act 1994 provides: "(1) ... a trade mark means any sign capable of being represented graphically which is capable of distinguishing goods or services of one undertaking from those of other undertakings."

Section 3 provides: "(1) The following shall not be registered: (a) signs which do not satisfy section 1(i), (b) trade marks which are devoid of any distinctive character, (c) trade marks which consist exclusively of signs or indications which may serve, in trade, to designate the kind, quality, quantity, intended purpose, value, geographical origin, the time of production, goods or rendering of services, or other characteristics of goods or services, (d) trade marks which consist exclusively of signs or indications which have become customary in the current language or in the bona fide and established practices of the trade. Provided that, a trade mark shall not be refused registration by virtue of paragraph (b) (c) or (d) ... if, before the date of application for registration, it has in fact acquired a distinctive character as a result of the use made of it."

MR JUSTICE LADDIE said that in 1963 Jeryl Lynn Hillman, aged six, contracted mumps, a disease caused by a pathogenic virus. Her father, Dr Hillman, then director of virus and cell biology research at the Institute within the Merck group of companies, isolated mumps viruses from a throat wash taken from his daughter, in whose honour Merck named the strain of virus it used for research, and finally, after 19 cycles of cell culture, so that it was termed "level 19 live virus" for production of the "Jeryl Lynn" strain.

In 1992 SKB had asked Merck for a sample of the Jeryl Lynn strain; and on receipt purchased a vial of one of Merck's mumps vaccines, which was readily available on the market, extracted the live virus and used it as a parent from which SKB produced its own attenuated strain, naming it "RT 4385" and using it to make and market, under the trade name "Priorix", its own vaccine. SKB's literature identified its trade name, stated its ingredients as including "RT 4385" and that it was a new mumps virus strain "derived from Jeryl Lynn mumps strain".

sign indicated who the product or service came from, or only what it was.

His Lordship referred to *Canon Kabushiki Kaisha v Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc* Case C-39/97 (The Times October 10, 1998); *Philips Electronics NV v Remington Consumer Products Ltd* (The Times February 2, 1998; [1998] RPC 283) and *British Sugar plc v James Robertson and Sons Ltd* (The Times February 17, 1996; [1996] RPC 281, 302).

Where a name had been used for many years before the application to register, the answer to the central factual issue might be indicated by the response to four questions: 1 What was the product to which it had been applied?

2 What was the product to which it had been applied?

3 Had it been used on the product as a designation of origin?

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Safe third country despite refusal of entry

Regina v Secretary of State for the Home Department Ex parte Adan
Before Lord Justice Rose and Mr Justice Mitchell (Judgment November 24)

Germany was a safe third country for an asylum seeker although her claim for asylum there had been refused.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE, giving the judgment of the court, said that in the four appeals the following questions arose: 1 To what extent and in what circumstances did a lawyer's immunity from suit in relation to allegedly negligent conduct of a case in court protect him from claims for allegedly negligent acts and omissions taking place out of court?

2 Did a lawyer if not otherwise immune from a claim in negligence by a client become so when the court approved a consent order in any proceedings, but particularly in matrimonial proceedings for ancillary relief?

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Thus when any advocate claimed to be immune in respect of any specific act or omission it was necessary to test that claim by reference to the particular act or omission and to examine the public policy grounds which might be relied on to support the recognition of immunity in that instance.

There was nothing in those cases to suggest that anyone was immune in relation to anything done, or omitted, out of court if he would not have been immune in relation to the same thing done, or omitted, in court.

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At the very least, it would be incumbent on a party seeking to mount a collateral challenge to such an order to explain why steps were not taken to set it aside or challenge it in the original proceedings.

If that threshold was crossed the *Hunter* test had to be adapted appropriately to the particular case, bearing in mind that the fundamental issue was one of abuse.

The initiation of proceedings against legal advisers which involved a collateral attack on a consent judgment approved by the court in previous proceedings might and ordinarily would be an abuse of process unless the plaintiff could properly allege a breach of duty which either: 1 Deprived him of a reasonable opportunity of appreciating that better terms were available whether on settlement or on a contested hearing than he obtained, or 2 Placed him in the position of having to accept a settlement significantly less advantageous or more disadvantageous than he should have had.

It was always necessary to consider with care: (i) the nature and effect of the claim made in the later proceedings and (ii) any grounds relied on to justify the collateral challenge, if found to be such.

Any doubt as to the advice in question, and whenever and wherever given, the basic question had always to be whether public policy required the recognition of immunity in the particular case. Any doubt was to be resolved against the grant of forensic immunity, since such immunity derogated from a fundamental principle and the law should be slow to grant its own practitioners a protection denied to members of other professions.

The court's views were consistent with and foreshadowed by all authority binding on it, save for the possible exceptions of: 1 *Kelley v Corston* [1998] QB 680; that was a difficult case to follow and apply, the ratio of the majority being somewhat elusive. It was difficult to derive any clear principle from the case but in any event it did not govern the present appeals which all concerned solicitors only. 2 *Brennan v Owen White* [1996] 1 FTLR 1 since that was an interlocutory decision of two Lord Justices refusing leave to appeal the strict doctrine of stare decisis did not apply to it. The court did however agree with the conclusion in *Kelley v Corston* disapproving *B v Miller & Co* [1996] 2 FLR 23. The court then considered the individual appeals, adding that it commended the practice of grouping for a single hearing a number of appeals raising the same general point of law in different factual circumstances. It saved time and helped the court to appreciate the ramifications of its decision. Solicitors: Weightmans, Liverpool; Hill Dickinson, Liverpool; Reynolds Porter Chamberlain; Cooper Whiteman, Wansborough; Willey Hargrave, Leeds. Bond Pearce, Exeter; Stephens & Scown, Exeter.

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THE TIMES

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CHANGING TIMES

'Loaded and FHM are not for me. They are for kids'

As Editor of GQ, James Brown has kicked his cocaine habit and put on a Savile Row suit but, Carol Midgley finds, something of the rebel lingers

Setting up an interview with James Brown, Editor of GQ and birth mother of *Loaded*, is not the straightforward matter it might have been two years ago.

For a start, his PR woman insists three days beforehand that he does not want to talk about his former drink and cocaine abuse, subjects that have excited many an interviewer in the past. What he wants to talk about is GQ, its aims and circulation, which seems a bit like being told that you've got an hour with Bill Clinton but all you can ask him about is Buddy and Socks.

The message from Condé Nast is that James Brown is clean now and wants to talk about grown-up things.

Thankfully, in the flesh, he has not become quite as boring as that. Half an hour into our interview he is standing on a sofa in the GQ publishing director's office bemoaning *The Times's* photographer for his dress sense as he stoically tries to take his picture.

"Shit shoes, crap tie. You wouldn't work for me dressed like that," he bellows, personifying what gave *Loaded* its "in-yer-face" humour. With great presence of mind, our photographer points to Brown's flamboyant striped suit and replies: "I wouldn't want to work for you dressed like that," a response that pleases Brown immensely.

Brown has been off the booze and drugs for 11 months now, and his new addiction, it seems, is GQ. He speaks with evangelical zeal about his plans for the magazine, which he has edited for 14 months. He has clearly thrown himself into living his lifestyle. He gets his sports car valeted and buys his suits from Savile Row — a far cry from his *Loaded* days when stories abounded about him waking up each morning with a blinding hangover, sharing his house with small rodents and dressing by picking last night's clothes off the floor.

As GQ celebrates its tenth anniversary this month, there is a small cause for celebration. Monthly sales from January to June were up 0.7 per cent to 130,152, although year on year the trend is down 0.4 per cent. Brown says that three times this year the magazine has achieved its best yet British newsstand sales.

"I was hired because GQ was in decline and not keeping up with the changes in the market," he says.

"When I arrived it was pretty stale. In the first six months I was in charge we stopped the decline. In the second six months sales went up, which is cool. It's the best team I have ever worked with. That room of people out there work really hard, they have never moaned; they have understood that we have the backing of the company, and what you now see is a very confident, modern men's magazine.

"When I first got here I thought 'great, let's go and sell loads' but then I realised it was a different market. You can't have 600,000 readers and also be cool because you are appealing to the mass. We sign for those who are very keen on what they look like, are aspirational, want the good things in life."

Brown becomes visibly bored when asked about *Loaded*, which is now the second biggest selling men's title after *FHM*. He likens it to talking about an ex-girlfriend.

"Asked why he thinks *FHM* performs better than *Loaded*, he replies, a little truculently: "I don't know — you'd have to ask them. I'm not really bothered about them. I'm not with *Loaded* any more."

"*Loaded* was quite an innovative and maverick title; *FHM* just took the *Loaded* attitude and gave it GQ's clothing."

So which does he prefer of the two? "I don't think about it. Look, I'm 33. I get a proper wage. I don't read magazines for fun. It's like asking me which is the best magazine, *Smash Hits* or *Top of*



A transformed James Brown has thrown himself into the GQ lifestyle: "GQ is about glamour and excitement... our readers want the good things in life"

the Pops. They are not for me, they are for kids. My best friend is a teacher and he confiscates magazines, and I can assure you that all the 14 and 15-year-olds are reading *FHM* and that is why, in my opinion, it's not taken seriously in the world of fashion."

So who would be the typical GQ reader? "To partake in the GQ lifestyle you have to have a sense of adventure and a bit of nerve. You don't have to be rich or upper class, you just have to feel that you could rob a bank. So there you are — those guys who ploughed the Great Train Robbery would be ideal."

Those who know him say he has become a better editor since kicking the substances which he freely ad-

mitted were killing him. He now channels most of his energies positively. Instead of going to the pub, he goes home "to my lovely wife, Caz". If he does go out, he drinks mineral water or orange juice, a concept difficult to imagine.

"You don't need to drink to enjoy yourself. You can be fuelled and sustained by natural excitement. You didn't drink or take drugs when you were 12 and playing in the park with your friends, did you? If you are with people who are good fun and good friends, it doesn't matter."

He also dismisses comparisons of himself with Michael VerMeulen, the GQ editor who died several years ago of a cocaine overdose. "I

didn't know him. I always wanted to be like Nick Logan [editorial director of *The Face*], not Michael VerMeulen."

"I'm a better editor than Michael VerMeulen. I sell more copies, get more rewards. I work with better people. It's like comparing the man who invented the stealth bomber to the man who invented the jumbo jet. The guy is dead — I mean, give him a break — but I hadn't even read GQ when I started *Loaded*."

Brown, whose office is adorned with a 1974 picture of his other passion, Leeds United football team, is committed to his policy that GQ does not have to have women on the cover every month to sell, even though it must be a tempting way

to tease up the figures. (This month it is John Travolta.) He believes its strength is its fashion coverage. However, recently the magazine ran 3,500 words and a front cover picture on the phenomenon that is Emma Noble.

"GQ is about glamour and excitement, which includes both men and women. I'm not embarrassed about finding women attractive, I don't see where the problem is, why there is all this miserable liberal guilt."

"If you meet women who are repressed about expressing their sexual feelings towards men or women, they are normally pretty tedious and quite hard to get on with, and it's the same with men."

Brown has lured a number of high-profile writers to the title — Tony Parsons, Irvine Welsh and the BBC's head of foreign affairs John Simpson, which he points to as evidence that it is a magazine people want to be associated with.

"I am very lucky now with the people I am working with. They have every confidence in what they do, whereas before (at *Loaded*) it was just chaos, and I created the chaos so they thought I was leading the charge."

"I had stopped learning at *Loaded*. It had ceased to be a challenge. I am a lot calmer now, I have been happier at GQ than I ever was at *Loaded* or *NME*. In fact I'm happier than I've ever been."

Pinning down Pinochet

WILL General Pinochet consent to an interview with Channel 4? Tim Gardam, the new director of programmes poached from Channel 5, has ordered a rapid-response documentary on the General's life to be screened in January — and Channel 4 is hoping he'll be tempted.

The production, by George Carey's *Mentorn*. Barraclough Carey, has been told to get as close as possible to the man and has already been filming with the senators surrounding Pinochet at his court hearing. The team has access to family here and abroad as well as relatives of his victims, and has also sent researchers to Chile.

It's asking the question: was Pinochet evil, or should he be judged by the nastier nature of South American politics? The documentary points out he was the first politician to deploy the right-wing economic theories of Milton Friedman — taken up later by Margaret Thatcher.

LORD Grade's funeral this week was a simple affair but his memorial promises to be more in tune with his life. The Palladium is being booked by his company, The Grade Company, for a big event in March. Meanwhile, family friend Bill Conon, the former Managing Director of BBC TV, passes on this anecdote from the 1980s: "Low



Maggie Brown's

came to the BBC to sell the rights to a film. I conducted the negotiations, we agreed the price. But as he got to the door he said: 'We were talking guineas you know. He just couldn't help himself.'

THERE has been much discussion recently about why women's sports don't get an airing on TV. A vital clue is provided at this week's preview of *Play-*



Less sport: *Playing the Field*

ing the *Field*. Kay Mellor's BBC1 drama about a female football team, made by Tiger Aspect Productions. The first series last spring was not as big a hit as expected. So the second one has totally changed focus. It seems to have banished football — in favour of sex, messy relationships and the drama of childbirth. Mellor says that women viewers thought the series was about football and so not for them.

JANE ROOFT, the woman behind *dinnerladies* and *The Cops*, becomes the first woman Controller at BBC2 weeks after Jeremy Abramsky was selected, to her surprise, as the new Director of Radio, outgunning James Boyle, head of Radio 4.

It's also goodbye to affable Scot Ron Neil, Chief Executive of BBC Production but best known for his rebuff in 1986 of Norman Tebbit's attack on Kate Adie's reports of the Libyan bombing. He leaves the corporation next week. Suave Will Wyatt, Chief Executive of BBC

Broadcasts who retires next year, is available for new challenges as well. The outgoing Director-General, Sir John Birt, has reportedly said that he's looking forward to a new life, being more creative — thought to be a reference to writing his memoirs. He is said to have kept a daily diary — in bullet points.

AT Pinewood Studios this week, Lord Putnam was putting his passionate advocacy of proper training to good use, handing out skill set awards to rising film and TV technicians.

He tells me he's much taken by a recent interview in the *Financial Times* with Sir Christopher Bland, the BBC chairman who said: "The most important thing is not organisation structures and flow charts, but creativity." Pretty much what Putnam said in his fabled bid to become deputy chairman last summer. Perhaps Putnam would steal his thunder.

After falling behind the *Daily Mail* in October, *The Mirror* fought back in November to reclaim its position as Britain's second best-selling national daily. Average sales were 2,322,684 (up 66,000 year-on-year) against 2,310,025 (up 78,000 year-on-year).

Airstrikes on Iraq: did anyone tell the BBC?

THE BBC likes to boast about having one of — if not the — largest news-gathering teams in the world. It has spent millions on the latest digital technology in an up-to-the-minute news centre at White City, And, as it happens, the corporation has just produced a mission statement for the next century in which it promises to be the world's most creative, and trusted broadcaster and programme maker and "to be the best — or learn from the best — in everything we do."

But it all counts for naught if the BBC's response to the most important story of the year — and quite a few other years as well — is to continue to show repeats of *One Foot in the Grave* on BBC1 as if nothing was happening, and then further interpret its public service mission by shoe-ploughing through *War and Piste*, a saga on the life and times of chalet girls. Elsewhere, the 24-hour news channels and *News at Ten* were bringing in live pictures from Baghdad, and even Channel 5 managed to produce a special news bulletin. As Scott and Fraser were moonlighting as skiwear models on *War and Piste*, BBC2 offered something completely different — *Naked*, the last in a series looking at the effect of gravity on our saggy bodies. BBC2 also provided the high point of comedy. As the Prime Minister was speaking live to the nation explaining why he was asking British airmen to risk their lives over Iraq — a speech carried live on *News at Ten*, *Sky News* and the BBC's News 24 channel — BBC2 was broadcasting a recorded Labour Party political broadcast. At that point *War and Piste* was concentrating on the fallout from the

sacking of a chalet manager. Apart from a brief news flash, the main BBC news channels told viewers nothing about the unfolding drama until the scheduled edition of *Newsnight*, delayed by the party political, finally made it to air. *Newsnight* was at least then extended and transferred to BBC1 to continue the catch-up, but by then those watching the BBC were the worst-informed viewers in the country.

BBC television's coverage — or the lack of it — of the Iraq attack raises interesting questions. The BBC could hardly have been taken by surprise. All the signals, short of the actual time that the attacks would commence, were there when Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, appeared on Radio 4's *Today* programme on Wednesday morning. And as there was general agreement that an attack would not be politically feasible during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, it was either going to be Wednesday night or last night.

So it seems the BBC deliberately decided not to interrupt programmes and rely instead on the fact that it now has News 24, even though few people are able to see it. It is hard to imagine why the BBC did not clear one of its channels and broadcast News 24 (which, though amateurish, was live) to the wider audience — at the very least for the Prime Minister's statement. After all, licence payers should get some benefit from the £30 million a year they pay for News 24. If the BBC really does

want to learn from the best, it has many mentors to choose from this morning.

ITN, of course, was lucky. The anti-aircraft fire was going up just as *News at Ten* came on air. Which raises the question of what would have happened if it were January or February and there was no *News at Ten*. It is a warning for ITV, and for the Independent Television Commission. Arrangements have to be put in place to ensure that on nights when momentous events happen ITN is allowed to cover it as it happens and not just at 11pm.

Sky News coverage was comprehensive, and the decision to split the screen useful. Viewers could keep an eye on live pictures of Baghdad while watching the latest news from the United States and being guided by text headlines at the bottom of the screen.

It is surely outrageous, however, that SkyDigital still has no digital deal with CNN, so that those with the latest technology and supposedly getting greater choice are still denied a channel that, on these occasions, is an essential part of the picture.

At least the news broke kindly for the newspapers, and everyone had time to remake comprehensively their later editions. Those who snuck with *War and Piste*, *Naked* and the party political broadcast can catch up on what Tony Blair actually said by reading the full text of his speech in the newspapers.



Playground

The battle that will change TV for ever

The struggle for pay-TV supremacy is hotting up. Ihab Makaris, who worked on two digital launches on the Continent, argues that the rivalry will transform the television landscape

On a September evening in 1995, six men gathered in an office in the La Defense area of Paris. They met to discuss a new satellite TV service that would take on Canal Plus, Europe's pay-TV pioneer and the monopolist in the French market.

One month ago, in the UK, another television venture, ONdigital, came to life to challenge BSKyB, an associate company of News International, owner of *The Times*. Initially, the contest seems unequal. ONdigital starts with no existing subscribers: Sky with six million. ONdigital has no experience in pay-TV: its opponent is regarded as the most powerful and most profitable pay-TV company in the world. ONdigital has 15 channels; Sky more than 100. Worse, the key film and sports rights are within BSKyB's control.

With the launch of a challenger to BSKyB, the UK is in uncharted waters. For those of us who guided the start of TPS in France and VIA Digital in Spain, the insights are surprising. They suggest that the entry of a second player may transform the structure of the industry.

In France, TPS began from a worse position than ONdigital. Canal Plus was a monopolist with ten years' head start, but, unlike ONdigital, TPS had no access to its rival's premium content. With the American studios and soccer rights almost wholly sewn up by Canal Plus, TPS had almost none of its own. Unlike ONdigital, TPS had to persuade customers to install a dish. We launched in October 1996. In the first six months we added 365,000 subscribers, more

than double our predictions. Incredibly, TPS was adding new subscribers at more than twice the rate that Canal Plus was through its subsidiary, Canal Satellite. TPS is now firmly established — and shortly afterwards, Via Digital achieved the same in Spain.

Understanding what happened reveals some insights for the UK. First, TPS offered a lower-cost entry package, greater flexibility and a basic-plus-film package 40 per cent cheaper than Canal Satellite's.

With the launch of a challenger to BSKyB, the UK is in uncharted waters

which responded by lowering its prices and by competitive unbundling. In the UK, we have witnessed the same phenomenon. The second act was more unexpected. We feared a dramatic reduction of prices by Canal Satellite to build market share and force us out. As in the tussle between Sky and BSB, players are willing almost to bankrupt themselves in this phase.

Indeed, Canal Satellite matched us reduction for reduction. In the spring of 1997, the two followed each other down on price. Then Canal Satellite's price froze and a few weeks later it moved upwards, rising until a gap existed

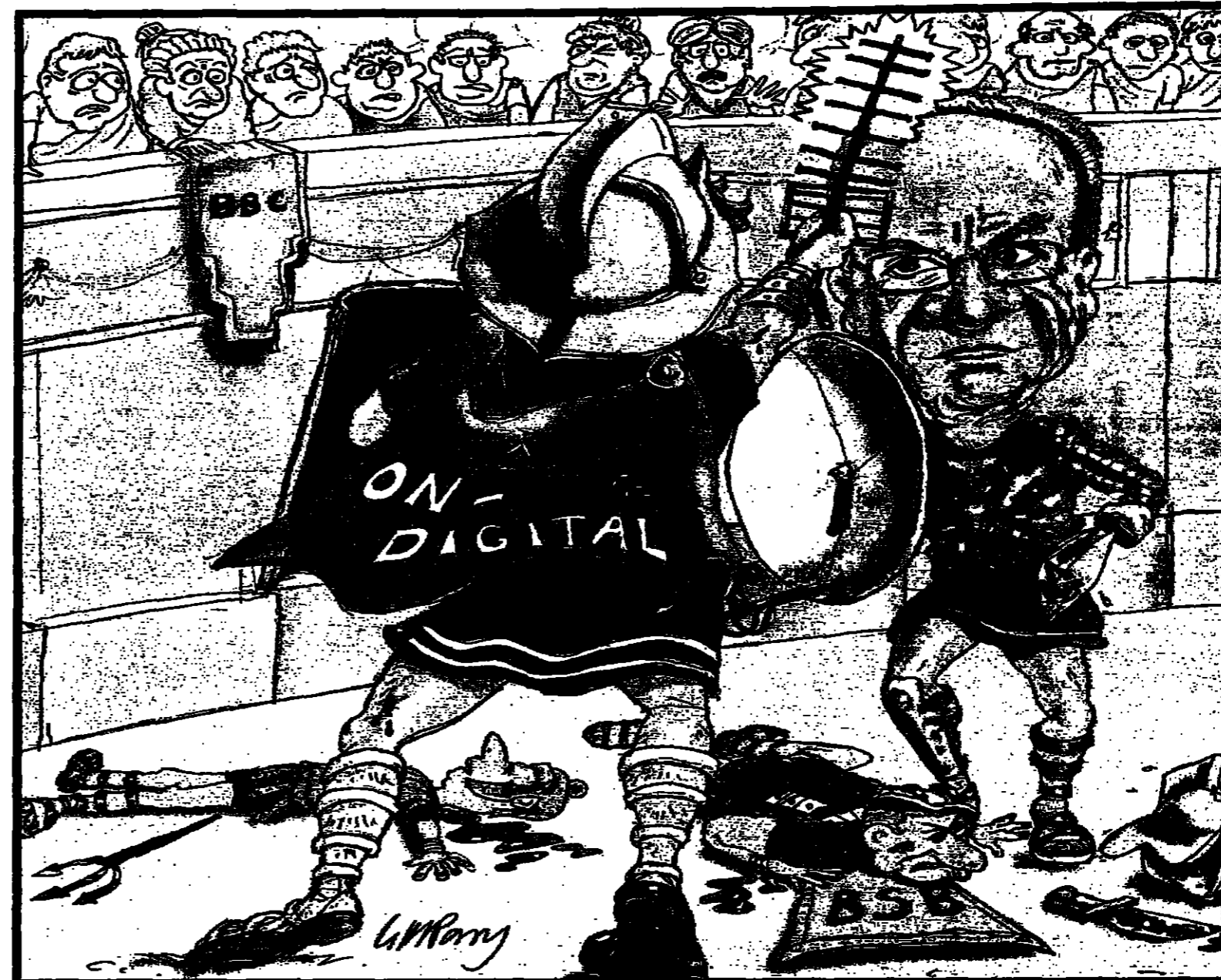
between us. It became apparent that Canal Satellite's head start and its existing analogue subscriber base had come to act as a straitjacket. As it tried to lower prices, existing analogue subscribers complained, and the alternative — extending the lower prices to that base — would have eaten into its cash cow.

After this, the market segmented into two, with many of the most price-sensitive mass market coming to us, and Canal Satellite still attracting those willing to pay premium prices. The lesson for ONdigital is that a big price-sensitive segment exists. Of course, the advantage of not requiring a dish plays to that area.

The question now is whether BSKyB, and Rupert Murdoch, will follow Canal Satellite to the refuge of the upper market. His past behaviour in newspapers points to an instinct to serve the mass market and build up market share. The evolution of the UK pay-TV market has left it with a legacy of high pricing, which has, if anything, pushed Murdoch into the opposite corner.

More than 50 per cent of UK households are estimated to be unable to afford a multichannel package with one premium bundle. It is digital that will bring these people into play. With TPS, as competition intensified and prices came down, so the rate of adoption of digital took off and is now passing two million. The lesson of France is that it is not digital itself but competition that transforms the market.

Our third insight concerned the implications of the involvement in the TPS platform of the French equivalent of the ITV companies. As in the UK, the power of this cross-promo-



Gladiatorial contest: ONdigital has thrown down the challenge to BSKyB in the struggle to dominate the new market for digital television viewers

tion engine in luring viewers to pay-TV was recognised, but underestimated.

These effects will be more marked in the UK, where the challenger is using a different

technology, digital terrestrial. The numerous free channels available on digital terrestrial will help to drive its take up.

But will ONdigital and BSKyB really be competing? In the short term, probably not. This may suggest a mutually beneficial coexistence. However, they will soon come up against each other in two different markets.

The first will be in the consumer market when competition will have forced subscription levels to new lows. This will open up fresh markets; our hypothesis is that Murdoch will not let the mass market go to a competitor.

The second arena will be in

the content market. Sky is in the position of being a rights reseller for premium content. ONdigital finds itself with a monopoly supplier which is also its rival. What this means can be seen from the evolution of the cable industry, which has enjoyed the same relationship with Sky. Yet in the current relationship BSKyB is, in terms of influence and access to profits, effectively the third shareholder of ONdigital.

Beyond a desire to escape this straitjacket will be a deeper motive for ONdigital and its shareholder, Carlton. That is to move beyond the provision of basic channels, to enter the game of premium content.

ONdigital's entry represents a new competitor for premium content. This gives a great opportunity for the suppliers of premium content — the American studios and the FA Premier League — to take their future in their own hands. Having now realised the value of their product, it is natural to ask for more profit; and that the best way of ensuring this would be to establish a credible counter-bidder to Sky.

With premium content in play and integrated digital TV sets open to other entrants, there would be little to stop other suppliers of basic channels from retailing packages direct to the public. This would

mean that Sky would face counter-bidders for all content as well as for customers.

This is the nightmare scenario for BSKyB. To avoid the Premier League undermining Sky's gatekeeper position it was necessary to do something — and News Corp's bid for Manchester United materialised. Far from being an aggressive attempt to extend control, it was a defensive move.

All of which shows how far-reaching the implications of the introduction of digital technology really are.

Ihab Makaris is head of media practice at Gemini Consulting

MEDIA & MARKETING

UNIVERSITY FOR INDUSTRY

Leading a revolution in lifelong learning

Salary: To Be Agreed **Location: Sheffield**

The University for Industry is being established to stimulate demand for lifelong learning and to promote the use of high quality learning materials, particularly those using information and communications technologies. The initial priorities are basic skills, IT skills, small and medium-sized businesses, and the automotive components, multimedia, environmental services and retail and distributive sectors.

A key part of the University for Industry's activities will be to build a portfolio of high quality open and distance learning packages. The aim is that these will set new standards of excellence through the innovative use of ICT for learning.

UFI will not develop its own learning materials. It will contract with others to do so, either by endorsing existing materials which meet UFI's exacting standards, arranging for the enhancement of existing materials or commissioning the production of new materials.

HEAD OF COMMISSIONED LEARNING PRODUCTS

The Head of Commissioning Learning Products will have executive responsibility for commissioning and endorsement of all UFI learning products, will lead a team of commissioning staff, and will report to the Director of Learning Operations. The successful candidate will have a record of success at senior level in commissioning or producing learning materials, educational software, multimedia products or broadcast material in a commercial, education, publishing or broadcasting environment.

Experience of at least one of the UFI's priority areas is desirable but not essential. The Head of Commissioning will make a major strategic contribution to the development of UFI.

SECTOR COMMISSIONING MANAGERS

The UFI is seeking to appoint a team of Sector Commissioning Managers. Reporting to the Head of Commissioned Learning Products, they will have responsibility for a specific sector of UFI learning products, eg IT, basic skills, management, retail and distribution, automotive. They will identify the learning needs of the sector, commission learning materials in appropriate media including ICT based media and manage the process to delivery. They will make a significant contribution to the effective development of UFI. Candidates should have a record of success in one or more relevant sectors and/or media, gained in an education, publishing, software or related environment.

Applications for both positions should take the form of a letter and full CV, indicating sectoral experience and present salary. Applications should be submitted to Aled Williams, Room NS04, Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ by Tuesday 12 January.

For an information pack, please call Aled Williams on 0114 259 3140. To discuss the work of the UFI and these positions, please call John Lambert on 0114 259 3468.

Contracts will be for a fixed period of one to three years. The University for Industry will follow equal opportunities principles.

Cheesy John Cleese is top of the turn-offs

THE most irritating television ad of the year was a commercial for Sainsbury's featuring John Cleese at his most obnoxious, according to a poll carried out by Marketing. The ad, in which Cleese chivied supermarket staff for not boasting enough about the store's bargains, had already provoked complaints from Sainsbury's employees who said it made them look stupid. Of a sample of 1,000 viewers, 17 per cent put the commercial at the top of their "peeve list". Joint second were an ad for SkyDigital showing television sets jumping off a cliff and one for Clover spread featuring Rod Hull and Emu.

A NEW daily racing paper to rival the *Racing Post* may be launched in the spring, Press Gazette reports. Called the *Racing Herald*, it is the brainchild of Mike Gallimore, who edited *The Sporting Life* from 1988 to 1993. The *Life* was closed this year when its owner, Mirror Group, bought the rival *Racing Post* to give itself a monopoly. Gallimore will not comment on his plans, but colleagues say he is hopeful of finding investors.

A BIZARRE series of events led to Grey Advertising, an international ad agency, learning through a brusque fax that it had lost the £30 million account for Barilla, the world's largest pasta manufacturer. Marketing Week reveals. The row sprang from a dispute between Italy and Turkey, which wants the Italians to allow

the extradition of a Kurdish dissident. When they refused, the Turks countered with a gory television ad that showed blood dripping on to a bowl of pasta. Learning that Grey's Turkish affiliate was linked to the company that made the ad, the Italian pasta maker boiled over, ignoring Grey's claim that it was not directly involved.

A NEW Editor has been appointed at Press Gazette. She is Philippa Kennedy, a journalist with a national tabloid when she took over the *Daily Express* newsdesk. She has also worked for *The Sun* and written for a wide range of magazines.

PUBLIC-SPIRITED television advertisers are going to make sure we have a miserable holiday break, reports Marketing Week. A series of no-holds-barred horror commercials will warn us of the dangers of drink-driving, smoking, unprotected sex and domestic violence. "Hard-hitting tactical messages are becoming part of everyone's traditional Christmas," says the magazine. "As it is the one time of year when the campaigns seem to have a captive audience."

MICHAEL LEAPMAN

Sales Executives - Telecommunications

Infonet is a well established leading international telecommunication services provider with a seamless global network of both people and technology and an impressive rate of profitable growth. To build on their existing customer base they are seeking to recruit people to develop New Business across the United Kingdom.

The Services:
Infonet offer the following range of Global Services:

- Frame Relay & X.25
- Internet & Intranet
- Managed Voice and Voice Over Frame Relay
- LAN to LAN & Remote Access
- Electronic Commerce & Messaging

Qualifications:
The Ideal Candidate should have the following skills:

- Minimum 3 Years Success in "Solutions Selling"
- New Business Sales Experience
- Knowledge of the Telecommunications Markets
- Drive & Enthusiasm
- Good Communication & Presentation Skills

Technical Sales Support - Telecommunications

We are also looking to recruit an experienced Sales Support Executive to work closely with the sales team and customers to understand requirements, design proposals and provide a high level of technical support and advice to Infonet customers and prospects. Educated to degree level you should have an in depth telecommunications technical background and be "Customer Facing".

Infonet offer you an unparalleled opportunity to join a rapidly expanding customer driven organisation and to realise your true potential. Extremely competitive remuneration packages are offered with no upper limit and usual big company benefits. Full product training will be provided in California.

infonet
http://www.infonet.com

Send your CV including salary expectations to our advising Consultants:
Venator International Limited
Albany House, Market Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 8BC
Email: apply@venatorinternational.com; Fax 01628-622572
Web Site: http://www.venatorinternational.com

IPC MAGAZINES is to spend £9 million on a marketing initiative aimed at boosting the profiles of its women's weeklies.

With titles such as *Now* and *Woman's Own*, IPC is the leader in this sector with a share of more than 40 per cent.

Women's weeklies account for more than eight million in sales. However, the circulation of most titles has dropped, year on year, according to the ABC figures for January to June 1998. Northern & Shell's *OK!* was the exception, enjoying a 50.4 per cent boost to 214,162. Bauer's *Take A Break*, the market leader, sold 1.2 million copies.

The size of the women's magazine market is illustrated by the difference between ad spend on men and women's titles. L'Oréal, the top spender in women's advertising over 12 months, dished out £4.8 million on women's titles. Rover Group, the biggest spender in men's titles, spent £384,000.

MediaTel's online media information and analysis service is accessed via the Internet at <http://www.mediatele.co.uk> (0171-439 7575)

WOMEN'S WEEKLIES

Magazine	Jan 98	Jun 98	ABC Year on year comparison
Bein	100	100	100
Best	100	100	100
Cher	100	100	100
Hell!	100	100	100
My Weekly	100	100	100
Now	100	100	100
OK Magazine	100	100	100
Peoples Friend	100	100	100
Take a Break	100	100	100
That's Life!	100	100	100
TV Quick	100	100	100
Woman's Own	100	100	100
Woman's Realm	100	100	100
Woman's Weekly	100	100	100

Source: ABC

On to
Te
rate
Karen Geary's diary
Edward Heath
has
has
Can the

On tour with Ted at a rate of knots

Karen Geary's diary charts a nationwide dash with Edward Heath, plugging his autobiography

October 8
Catch the Heathrow Express from Paddington en route to Brussels. Can't quite believe the tour has begun. Started working on the press campaign for *The Course of My Life*, Sir Edward Heath's autobiography, in February. EH's office asked if I wanted to travel VIP with him. Said I'd be happy to slum it in economy. Felt we'd both be more comfortable with this arrangement. Arrive at Heathrow to find that Radio 4 has upgraded me to first (R4 is making a documentary about the tour).

No sign of EH as we're cleared for take-off. Begin to think about a contingency plan if it's a no-show. One minute before take-off, EH boards. I have the week's reviews including a great one from *The Spectator*. Impossible to gauge his reaction but he must be pleased.

Feels great to be launching in Brussels in association with Waterstone's. EH gets a terrific reception and is on excellent form. Good questions from international audience. EH, usually accused of being abrupt to the point of rudeness with journalists, gives expansive answers. Wonder how to suggest to former PM that perhaps shorter answers and more questions might be advisable.

October 16
A day in Salisbury. Radio and press interviews at home. Many authors refuse to see journalists at home. Was surprised when EH said he was happy to see them there.

Tito, de Gaulle, Kennedy, Adenauer, Mao — the list is impressive. He has met them all

October 12
Drive to Lymington for first UK signing at King's Bookshop. On to Waterstone's in Southampton. A mad lady plants herself in front of EH and begins to rant. No one does anything. I persuade EH to sign a freebie newspaper from July, which she is brashly and eventually persuade her to move. I comment to EH that as a high-profile politician, he must be used to this sort of thing. He says drily that "in those days they'd never get anywhere near me".

Next destination: London. The Pan Bookshop in Fulham Road to sign stock. EH is very interested to know how Alan Clark and Chris Patten are selling. I can see these will be the benchmark. Fingers crossed for the bestseller list.

October 14
EH lives in Salisbury but has a London house. Receive a call from Sarah, his secretary, to say that the water tank has burst and done immense damage. No longer possible to stay there overnight. Told he would prefer to go home to Salisbury.

October 19
To Manchester, then on to Chester for a dinner as part of a literary festival. Tory audience enjoys EH's speech. One tricky question about his thoughts on President Clinton. Pause. "My thoughts are that we should leave the thinking to the Americans."

October 21
Lunchtime signing in Selfridges. At 8pm to London Studios to record Clive Anderson. EH is on after Boyzone. Feels he could have been funnier but we reassure him that he did well. Clive unfazed by Ted's comment on his hair loss since they last met.

October 22
By train to Cambridge for signing at Heffers. Then on to Bury St Edmunds, where we meet the first demonstrators. Dressed in Barbours and brandishing placards "Trainee no euro, keep our postcard, they are guarded by the local body". Tomorrow, EH goes to Japan. A week off.

November 6
To the Isle of Wight. Leave ridiculously early for Waterloo. Delayed, delayed, delayed. Begin to understand commuter rage. Manage to make Southampton in time. EH is invited on to the bridge of the catamaran. Much sailing talk and reminiscing. I've ordered a car to meet us. Ancient old Mercedes rattles us to Otterker's Bookshop in Newport. EH doesn't complain. In fact he hasn't complained about anything, which is astonishing.

November 9
Drive to Winchester. Signing at Waterstone's. Arrive early as I've promised EH a decent lunch. Ask tourist office to tell me which is the best restaurant in town. They say they're not allowed. Ask for a list of restaurants. Visit six. The first five won't do but the Hotel du Vin is perfect. One of the best wine cellars in England. EH looks pleased when I tell him where I've booked. He has been before and the sommelier is as pleased to see him as EH is to be there.

November 10
Drive to the Mill Restaurant at Eversley. EH is to speak at a lunch organised by Blackwell's bookshop in Reading. EH gives a good talk and answers the questions robustly. Someone asks which world leaders have impressed him. Tito, de Gaulle, Kennedy, Adenauer, Mao — he has met them all. "I've always wanted to see what is going on for myself, not to rely on second-hand reports." That's why meeting Hitler, Himmler and Goering at the Nuremberg trials and seeing what "a fear-some threat Hitler would be" made him determined to work for European unity to ensure "it never happened again".

December 11
Only one more week to go. EH has a relatively light week. Interviews scheduled with Classic FM, *The New York Times* and Radio 4's *World at One* — he will do a review of the year. Two signing sessions. It's just as well that's the lot because EH is going to more Christmas parties than anyone else I know.

● Karen Geary is the publicity director of Hodder & Stoughton. *The Course of my Life* is published by Hodder & Stoughton, £25.



Sir Edward Heath with Karen Geary, who accompanied him on an exhausting book tour

Emap takes on America

Raymond Snoddy on the Petersen acquisition

This week, after just six months as chief executive of Emap, the magazines, radio and exhibition group, Kevin Hand spent \$1.2 billion (£750 million) to take the British media group into the American market for the first time. With the purchase of Petersen, with specialist-interest titles such as *Hot Rod*, *Max Speed* and *Teen*, Hand, who has been part of the Emap team for 25 years, is now in charge of the UK's largest magazine group and one of the biggest in the world.

Many British companies have been lured to their doom by the size and potential of the American market but Hand is confident of his ability to run the enlarged Emap after its biggest acquisition by far. "If you can do France, you can do anything," says Hand who was sent to manage Emap's move into the French magazine market five years ago, even though he was the only member of the Emap board without O-level French. In four years Emap went from 0 to 17 per cent of the French consumer magazine market.

Analysts are fretting about the price Emap is paying but many of them have also been waiting for Emap to make its big move into the biggest media market of all. This year total advertising expenditure in the United States is estimated at \$111.7 billion compared with \$36 billion for Japan, \$20.3 billion for the UK and \$19.6 billion for Germany. Next year the two fastest growing areas in the American media are predicted to be consumer magazines and radio, two Emap core businesses. "Every telephone call you make is seven times more effective than in Britain," Hand says.

One of Petersen's early tasks will be to take on the American launch of *FHM*, the magazine for young men. Other American launches of Emap's British titles could follow. Hand is looking longingly at many of the activities Petersen associates with its magazines. Next year, for example, it is launching *Crucial Games* in the US in a tie-up with NBC Sports. The *Games* will feature a series of new sports competitions, lifestyle and music events which will be broadcast internationally.

The Emap chief executive sees the Petersen acquisition as a first step into America and sees opportunities for further acquisitions. "Are we interested in radio in the States? Absolutely, yes," he says. But in the end with Hand it nearly always comes back to magazines: "I don't think that magazines have ever been as popular as they are now."

If the shareholders approve the Petersen acquisition he will be in charge of a further 130 titles. But there are more on the way. In the spring Emap is launching one of its biggest titles, Codenamed "Project J", it will address television and entertainment in all its forms.

Already the people at Petersen are wondering whether it could be launched in America.

Can the Dome fight back?

JUST when I thought the 1998 "advertising brief from hell award" was certain to go to the agency that had to promote the euro to the public — even though we wouldn't be joining in — along came the millennium. You know the millennium, marked by that silly Dome built on one poisoned land in Greenwich that no one will want to go to because there's nothing in it, and that no one will be able to reach because the Tube extension won't be ready in time.

You know about the millennium: the wasting of hundreds of millions of our money, taken from us in the guise of lottery tickets and other indirect taxes, to fund a monument to the egos of Messrs Blair and Mandelson. Instead of building useful, lasting things such as sports stadiums and concert halls.

You also know that the millennium is the biggest excuse for the mother of all compulsory parties, but you probably won't want to go anywhere because everyone will be hideously drunk, talking pretentious twaddle, getting maudlin, or all three. Wherever you go, you'll be royally ripped off by unscrupulous entrepreneurs making a fast buck. If you're lucky, you will have to stay at home to watch the Kranksies' millennium special because babysitters are charging £100 an hour.

You will also have heard that the millennium is the event from which sponsors are running scared, that will mess up our computers, and that the tabloids will rub-bish every day between now and December 31, 1999.

So, here's a challenge. Knowing what you know about the millennium, create a television commercial that conveys a

more spiritual message to the public, concentrating on the idea that the millennium should be regarded as a celebration of human achievement throughout the ages. Easy? Call in M & C Stachi. The agency ran the Tory party's advertising at the last election, so it is used to embracing lost causes. And isn't the Stachi brothers' whole approach to advertising based on the creed that nothing is impossible?

What we get is a predictably beautiful, "epic" film in which the achievements of great historical figures are represented by the speeded-up passing of a single day on Easter Island. Jeremy Irons, doing a sterling job on the voice-over, exerts us to contemplate the achievements of man. It could be hideous but it isn't, partly because of the imagery and — partly because Irons's voice does not hector; it's not patronising.

To suspend cynicism for a moment, it is the first piece of communication about the millennium that attempts to move beyond the party to a more spiritual or lyrical level — not easy in British advertising, which tends not to take itself too seriously in the way that the worst American advertising does. The only British advertiser to have attempted a similarly lofty perspective was BT, featuring Stephen Hawking discussing communication.

So does the millennium campaign, which went on air this week? It depends on what you believe it is really trying to do.

If you accept it as an attempt to move the debate on to a higher level than the Dome controversy, then it works — well, for 60 seconds at least. But if you are more cynical and believe that the ultimate aim of the ad is to get us to think more spiritu-



Easter Island: in the new Dome ad

ally about the millennium to take it more seriously in order to feel more disposed to visit the Dome to celebrate it, then it doesn't work.

The millennium is another excellent example — like beef last month — of an issue that cannot be solved through an ad campaign. When negative stories are in the papers every day, no amount of advertising can counter the effect.

The millennium commercial is a respectable start, but it is only a start. I still don't know why I should care. And there is a year of negative tabloid stories lying in wait to encourage me not to. The PR campaign must focus on moving the millennium away from the Dome and keeping Blair and Mandelson out of the stories. Even then, it won't be easy. We have all had too long to contemplate the cost without the reward.

● Stefano Hatfield is the Editor of Campaign

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CHANGING TIMES

THE TIMES
EDUCATION

Sing out to save the carol

Traditional hymns are a vital part of children's education, says Susan Elkin



Choristers of Salisbury cathedral school rehearse for a Christmas Eve concert. Are most children missing out on traditional carols?

Rousing traditional carols and great hymns used to be a cornerstone of shared experience. They may have begun as forms of religious expression but they developed into something more. Everyone knew them because they had learnt them at school. Not now. Increasingly, children are unable to sing more than a few first lines or name more than half a dozen carols. And why? Many schools, revealing a form of cultural vandalism, have jettisoned the tradition of communal singing, and, when it does happen, the "hymns" tend to be miserable, repetitive banalities on a handful of notes such as "Mary had a baby, yes Lord".

Or consider this dreadful piece of political correctness which I found recently in the hymnbook used daily in a leading independent school: "Mary blessed teenage mother... out of wedlock pregnant found... Now through all the townships ringing, hear the black madonna cry." As Barry Ferguson, a former organist and choirmaster of Rochester Cathedral and now a freelance composer and conductor, says: "It can't be said too loudly and widely that there is so much sentimental, impoverished drivel now passing for hymns." This time of year gives schools a great opportunity to introduce pupils to quality music. When hymn-singing is tried in the modern way children are often barely interested: assemblies with a piano-thumper or guitar-strummer at the front and everyone else standing in serried ranks of insolent silence are all too common. Perhaps tradition would have a greater power to inspire them.

Hymns and carols are also a largely untapped reservoir of cross-curricular resource material. Vocabulary is a good example: children who grew up with the weighty dignity of "Lo he abhors not the virgin's womb", "Hail the incarnate deity" or "By prophet bard foretold" were exposed to and learnt the meanings of words in context. And it doesn't matter if these things take time to absorb. It was T.S. Eliot who argued that fine language can communicate before it is understood. It is a shame that this principle is not adopted by the well-meaning reductionists in large schools who want every "i" crossed, every "t" dotted, every word "relevant" and all mystery abolished. You can explore the rhythm and workings of the language through Christmas hymns, too. Lovely alliterative lines such as "All in white shall wait around" or "Above thy deep and dreamless sleep" have plenty to teach an English class.

Then there are the really great poets, such as Christina Rossetti, whose work one might first encounter in a good hymn book. The poem she entitled *A Christmas Carol*, with its evocative opening line "In the bleak midwinter", is a masterpiece when sung in either of its moving settings by Gustav Holst or Harold Darke. How many schoolchildren are familiar with it now? Music teachers, too, could do much more with proper Christmas music. Mendelssohn's rousing tune for *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* actually has to be sung from the diaphragm. And to do that, you have to be taught how to make effective use of the instrument we all have. The Rev Gill Calver is a parish priest in Kent and chaplain at Dover College. "I spend a considerable amount of time choosing hymns and carols for services for young people," she says. "My aim is to enable them

to worship God through the words and music of these hymns. If young people are to develop a living faith, they need many different modes of expression." However, John Picton Bowen, the director of arts at St Aidan's C of E School, Poulton le Fylde, Lancashire, argues that the first purpose of a hymn is "to praise and worship God our Father". He points out that children who have been brought up on pop music may also need hymns that speak to them in a language they can understand. "To criticise modern hymns on the ground that they are modern is what C.S. Lewis called chronological snobbery," he says. An ideal situation would be a balance between the two. But to deprive children of the traditional — on the ground that it is too difficult or irrelevant — is not only damaging but also shortsighted.

Fighting the book shortage

For most teachers and many parents, it has always been an article of faith that the Government should provide everything state schools need to offer a satisfactory education. Private sponsorship has been treated with suspicion and even parental fundraising has served only to demonstrate ministers' lack of commitment to the cause.

The enthusiasm with which thousands of schools have greeted the Books for Schools scheme suggests that attitudes are changing, however. Supermarket computer schemes and parental fundraising campaigns have helped to allay fears that any private donation is bound to involve a subtle form of indoctrination. In an era of ever-rising costs, even the most committed statist has to think twice about looking a gift horse in the mouth.

The shortage of books in state schools has been worsening by the year, as governors have diverted money from hard-pressed budgets to keep class sizes down. The Government has recognised the scale of the problem by providing two grants of £1,000 per state school for books, but even this has delivered no more than the minimum standard of provision in many classrooms.

Without outside help, schools simply will not be able to maintain their book stock and keep pace with the developments in educational technology which are likely to transform teaching in the coming decades. Schemes such as Books for Schools, which will provide free books in exchange for tokens printed in *The Times* from next month, are certain to become more common. David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, was in no doubt about the value of such "public/private partnerships" in education when he endorsed the Books for Schools initiative his week. "Obviously," he said, "we have to be very careful that it doesn't become commercialised, but we think there is a real opportunity to turn people on to learning through schemes like this." Schools have until the end of the month to register for the scheme, if they have not done so already. The majority have — more than 20,000 at the last count. A helpline number (0845 6040312) provides further information.

Tokens will appear in every edition of *The Times* and other, News International newspapers, and on packets of Walkers crisps, from January until March. There will be more than 150 titles for registered schools to choose from, covering all stages of the national curriculum and including dictionaries, atlases and other reference books.



John O'Leary

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

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— A LEVEL AND GCSE EASTER REVISION —

WEEK 1: 29 MARCH - 2 APRIL WEEK 2: 5 - 9 APRIL WEEK 3: 12 - 16 APRIL

RACING: WOULD BE

Unsinkable earn ch

UTTO

3.30 OFF NATIONAL HUNT MONDAY

FOCUS

LORD GAINES' HORSES HANDICAP ONES

REPERA PAGE

COURSE SPECIALISTS

SNOW REPORT

RACING: WOULD-BE GOLD CUP CONTENDER MAKES CHASING DEBUT

Unsinkable Boxer out to earn championship shot

By Chris McGrath

STORIES about the unsinkable have not just been breaking box office records in 1998. They also came very near to breaking the bank for bookmakers at the Cheltenham Festival in March, the first day of which came to a calamitous end when Unsinkable Boxer landed perhaps the biggest gamble of the whole season.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: The Good Knight (12.30 Uttoxeter)

David Nicholson's runner ran well enough on his budding debut behind the well-regarded Naive King to suggest he can oblige. Today's longer trip will suit.

NB: Nearly An Eye (3.00 Uttoxeter)

most as soon as he landed over the last. One would imagine the layers would know better than to get themselves in a similar pickle this season, especially after he added another impressive win at Aintree. Yet they will watch Unsinkable Boxer's reappearance at Uttoxeter today with grim anxiety.

would be easy to dismiss but for the fact that they will never be formed in the first place. Pipe, however, continues to set his own standards. There is, moreover, a certain firm of unfinished business for Unsinkable Boxer's owner, Paul Green. His colours first appeared in 1991 through Carville Hill, the flawed giant who had his spine broken in the Gold Cup. For this first step on the journey, however, Unsinkable Boxer has scattered all but three of the original entry for the Leyley's Hog Roast Chase. Andantino appearing the least reckless.

Two established Pipe chasers, Cylor Malin and Cyborgo, test their Gold Cup credentials in the Pertemps King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day, though Cyborgo must first rid himself of a rust over timber at Ascot tomorrow. His rivals for the Sturtess Long Walk Hurdle include last year's winner, Paddy's Return, whose trainer could hardly be enduring a worse run of luck.

Ferdy Murphy hoped that a quiet season was picking up when Pharrig won the maid-

en chase at Catterick yesterday, but then watched in horror as the horse suffered a heart attack on his way to the winner's enclosure. At least this tragedy put into perspective his irritation at being snared in the small hours of the morning by a speed trap on the deserted A1 after the Racehorse Owners' Association (ROA) Awards in London. "You could say it has been a pretty bad day," he said. "The owners are devastated and it's an awful thing to have seen. The horse was just coming to himself and looked to have a good future."

At least French Holly, voted novice hurdler of the year by the ROA, offers a silver lining. Though he might be outpaced around Kempton in the Pertemps Christmas Hurdle, he hinted at Newcastle last time that he may yet give Istabraq something to think about back at the Cheltenham Festival.



Victory Gallop, nearside, who won the Belmont Stakes, will be a strong contender for the Dubai World Cup in March

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time/Status. Includes 12.30 Storm of Gold, 1.00 Over Zealous, 1.30 Unsinkable Boxer.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT (SOFT IN PLACES) TOTE ACQUOT MEETING SIS

Table for 12.30 EBF NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 1.00 GUINNESS NOVICES HANICAP CHASE (SHOWCASE RACE AND TOTE TRIFFETA RACE). Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for COURSE SPECIALISTS. Lists trainers, jockeys, and horses.

Table for SNOW REPORTS. Lists locations, snow depth, and conditions.

Table for 1.30 LEFLEYS HOG ROAST NOVICES CHASE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

1997: LESTER TOMMY 6-11-12 5 Wins (6-13) 6-13 6-13 6-13 6-13

Table for 2.00 49'S HOOPS LAURENT PERRIER HANICAP HURDLE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

1997: MIPPER REED 7-10-13 4 Wins (7-13) 7-13 7-13 7-13 7-13

Table for 2.30 EBF NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

1997: LORD OF THE RIVERS 5-11-5 4 Wins (5-11) 5-11 5-11 5-11 5-11

Table for 3.00 ST MOWDEN CHASE (LIMITED HANICAP). Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

1997: RANDOM ASSAULT 3-11-11 4 Wins (3-11) 3-11 3-11 3-11 3-11

Table for 3.30 WEATHERBY'S STARS OF TOMORROW NATIONAL HUNT FLAT. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

1997: ROSEBERRY BAY 4-11-11 4 Wins (4-11) 4-11 4-11 4-11 4-11

BLINKER FIRST TIME: Southwell: 12.20 Satly Behaviour, Impulsive Decision. 1.20 Kilmayeg Jazz. Uttoxeter: 12.30 Anuragha.

Table for LINGFIELD PARK. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 12.35 BRANDY BUTTER CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANICAP HURDLE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 1.00 MAC VIDI NOVICES CHASE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 1.40 HBLB CHRISTMAS MARES ONLY HANICAP HURDLE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for COURSE SPECIALISTS. Lists trainers, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 11.50 MAURITIUS MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 12.20 BOLTON MAY FOR BOOKMAKERS JOINTS CLAIMING STAKES. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 12.50 MAURITIUS MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 1.20 BOLTON MAY FOR BOOKMAKERS JOINTS CLAIMING STAKES. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for COURSE SPECIALISTS. Lists trainers, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 2.50 SOLOMON ISLANDS SELLING STAKES. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 2.10 EBF NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 2.40 PLUM PUDDING JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 3.10 COMMERCIAL CEBLING FACTORS NOVICES HANICAP CHASE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 3.40 HOLLY & IVY MAIDEN OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 1.50 CINCH CONNECTORS GOLIVE 98 MAIDEN STAKES. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 2.20 ADVANCED BRICKWORK CONTRACTORS NURSERY HANICAP. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 2.50 SOLOMON ISLANDS SELLING STAKES. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 3.20 WESTERN SAMOA AMATEUR RIDERS HANICAP. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for COURSE SPECIALISTS. Lists trainers, jockeys, and horses.

Table for 2.50 SOLOMON ISLANDS SELLING STAKES. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for COURSE SPECIALISTS. Lists trainers, jockeys, and horses.

Table for YESTERDAY'S RESULTS. Lists race names, winners, and times.

Table for Exeter. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for Towcester. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

Table for Catterick. Lists race details, jockeys, and horses.

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Marathon brings joy in the long run

What is it that gives you a buzz in life — what is your hobby, your passion? Can you remember the moment that started the whole thing off? Patrick Barnes can. He was on a business trip to Tokyo in 1979, shortly before his compulsory retirement, when his globetrotting days as an auditor for British Airways were coming to an end. "On my arrival at the hotel, I found it festooned with notices saying: 'Welcome to the International Ladies' Marathon.' This was news to me, as I regarded marathons as being only for the hardest of males," Barnes recalls. He was irritated at the inconven-

ience of the road closures when he wanted to go sightseeing, but was impressed to learn later that two British women had finished in first and second places. From the seeds of that weekend, Barnes gained a new way of life that was to dominate his retirement. No sooner had he become a pensioner than he began jogging. A year later, he watched Madge Sharples, only months younger than himself, run the first London Marathon. "Madge never

looked like a finisher at the beginning, but she was there at the end," he says. The next day, he sent off an entry for the New York Marathon. For 18 years now, Barnes has been studying the view from the rear of the field. From the stories he tells in *Tail of the Marathon*, you wonder whether it is just as satisfying as being at the front. On one occasion, he ran a 12-mile race at Blenheim Park. "I had feared this race would be right out of my class and so

ATHLETICS
by David Powell

it proved," Barnes writes. "I started in the middle of the pack, but, by 400 yards, I was running last." There is a sting in this tail, though. "Most of the competitors were soon out of sight and the only ones I could see were three young ladies with shining seats to their running shorts.

One stopped to walk on the hill but ran away as I approached. She broke into a walk and I overtook her. Then she sprinted and overtook me again, cut and nuzzing me until she just beat me to the end of the first lap. There she fell and I did not see her again." If there is satisfaction in finishing second-to-last, finishing second can feel good, too. Roger Black opens his autobiography by recounting his silver-medal run in the 400 metres at the Atlanta Olympic

Games. "Peace is not something you would expect in a stadium filled with 85,000 people," Black says. "but, as I crossed the line, peace was what I found." Though Black waited almost until the end of his career before publishing his autobiography, it was still too soon for the war that followed the peace. *Roger Black How Long's The Course?* pre-dates one of the most controversial non-selections in British athletics history, when the national

men's team captain was denied the opportunity last summer to win a third European individual title. Split times never sold many books, but split relationships do and the time that Black was so worried he was going to end up in a fight over a girl that he turned to a Navy PTI for training in hand-to-hand combat represents a change of pace in the reading. For those who prefer short stories, *The Winning Edge*, by Alastair Aitken, covers im-

mense ground. Based on interviews with athletes over more than 30 years, some well-known, others less so, Aitken reveals a broad range of experiences and analyses what drives them towards success, whether at the Olympics or a veterans' cross-country race. **□ Tail of the Marathon**, by Patrick Barnes, from Wednesday Press, Unit 3, Baron Court, Chancellors Way, Temple Farm Industrial Estate, Southend, Essex SS2 5SE (£5.99). **□ Roger Black How Long's The Course? with Mike Rowbottom, from Andre Deutsch, 76, Dean St, London W1V 5HA (£15.99). **□ The Winning Edge**, by Alastair Aitken, from The Book Guild, Temple House, 25, High St, Lewes, East Sussex BN1 2LU (£10.55).**

Sheffield tales of restless ambition

Ever since Mike Tyson fell from grace in 1992, there have been few personalities to write about and books about boxing have tended to be either polemic or pretentious attempts to revamp old stories.

However, this year, boxing enthusiasts will find two books, among the usual batch of no-hopers, to their liking — *The Paddy and the Prince*, by Nick Pitt, and *Upper Cuts and Dazes*, by Reg Gutteridge.

The first is an account of the making of Naseem Hamed and is one of the best books on boxing for a long time, for the simple reason that it is about a live subject — a high-profile personality and his trainer. It is about the aspirations of the families of two immigrants who came to Great Britain in the fifties, Sal Hamed, from the Yemen, and Brendan Ingle, from Dublin, and made their fortunes out of boxing. Ingle seeks little more than financial security, symbolised by the new tall gates of his modest home in Wincobank, Sheffield; the Hameds, who moved from Wincobank to the leafy suburbs of south Sheffield, aspired to build a business empire.

Yet, beyond the stuff of soap opera, the tittle tattle, the boxer's fast German cars, the rows about training and mon-



Triple tonic: Hamed, left, is the subject in one of the best boxing books for years, while Norman, centre, and Black feature in publications that would grace any Christmas stocking

BOXING
by Sri Kumar Sen

ey that have been swept under the carpet for so long, and the bookies, there is an insight about what motivates a favourite of the British media.

If I were going on a long journey, the man I would like sitting opposite is Reg Gutteridge. He could keep me amused for miles and miles with stories about boxing. His biography begins, like Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*, with the D-Day landings, in which Gutteridge lost his left leg after stepping on a mine.

The 20-year-old gunman's account of the horrific incident is far more moving than Spielberg's depiction of landing on Omaha Beach. Throughout his career, Gutteridge never harboured any rancour towards Germans. Only one more thing to say: "Give Jerry an inch and he'll take a foot."

He soldiered on to become one of Britain's most respected boxing writers with the *Evening News* and then one of the world's leading television commentators with ITV.

Gutteridge met the great boxers, managers and trainers and the stories he recounts about them are humorous and revealing. He tells about the time when Joe Louis picked up the house telephone in Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas, and said: "Get me the President." Moments later, a voice over the Tannoy said: "Mr Joe Louis, you have a call from the White House." And Louis said: "Would you mind putting me through to Cery Ford, please." The book will give immense pleasure.

□ The Paddy and the Prince, by Nick Pitt (Yellow Jersey Press, £16). **□ Upper Cuts and Dazes** by Reg Gutteridge (Blake Publishing, £16.99).



Gutteridge amusing

Golf and golf courses lend themselves to good descriptive writing illustrated with evocative photographs. Such books are two-a-penny and often ho-hum. However, two of the best have been published this year. *Pride of place* must go to *Legendary Golf Clubs of Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland*, the work of Anthony Edgeworth, the photographer, and John de St. Jorre, the writer. There are coffee-table golf books and then there is this one, which costs almost as much as a coffee table anyway. The collaborators have targeted 12 clubs in these islands and while Edgeworth clearly spent days setting up photographs of members and of the club's treasures, his partner was busy interviewing members prior to writing several thousand words of felicitous text. Members of the clubs, which include Royal Portcawl, Royal County Down, Portmarnock, Rye, Royal St George's and Sunningdale, will treasure this book, but so will anyone who cares about the soul of golf, its sociability and traditions.

In the mid-Seventies Alistair Cooke wrote the foreword to *The World Atlas of Golf*, by Pat Ward-Thomas, Herbert Warren Wind, Charles Price and Peter Thomson. It

Great courses given special treatment

has now been updated, amended and reprinted and Derek Lawson has had the privilege of adding his name to the previous four.

This book set a new standard when it came out, combining drawings and informative maps of courses with authoritative text that sometimes took the breath away. If the revised and updated version has a weakness, it is that there is not enough evidence of new material — but perhaps that is too sharp a criticism. Any golfer would be grateful to receive this book as a present.

Bill Elliott once worked for a daily newspaper and his name now appears regularly in the columns of *The Observer*. He may have discovered his true writing style upon leaving the daily grind. His book *This Sporting Life: Golf* is lively and well-written and far more interesting

GOLF
by John Hopkins

than his formulaic title would suggest. Lauren St John's *Greg Norman The Biography* is as thorough and well-written as would be expected from St John, who, sadly, no longer writes about golf.

Jim Arthur knows everything that there is to know about greens. For years, he was the agronomist for the R and A and, for years, he fought a noble fight to prevent over-watering. "There are two things ruining golf courses," Arthur used to say. "One is the fruit machine, the other the television camera. Both produce a lot of money for golf and then it is badly spent because people will equate col-

our with quality. Colour has no place on a golf course. The natural colour of a golf course is grey-green, not lush green. Then the greys there, the finish is there and it will be the same in mid-winter as mid-summer."

In *Practical Greenkeeping*, Arthur is at his best, full of good sense about an area of golf where sense is not always talked. The R and A regard it as the definitive book on course agronomy and management. "Invariably controversial, but infuriatingly nearly always right, Jim Arthur's knowledge about courses and greenkeeping is probably second to none," Sir Michael Bonalack, the club secretary, writes.

It would be hard to think of a better partnership than John de St. Jorre, a past captain of the R and A, of Royal Liverpool and a writer of style, and Peter Lewis, the director of the

British Golf Museum, the men responsible for *Challenges and Champions: The Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews 1754-1883*. It is the first of an anticipated three volumes of the R and A's history, the last one scheduled for 2004 to mark the club's 250th anniversary.

At the launch of this magnificent volume, Behrend did not seem daunted at the prospect of having to produce two more in double-quick time. If the subsequent volumes are as good as the first, they will go some way towards redressing an obvious weakness of golf in that its early years have been far less well covered than, say, cricket's.

□ Legendary Golf Clubs of Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland by Anthony Edgeworth and John de St. Jorre (Edgeworth Editions, £39).

□ The World Atlas of Golf (Hamlyn, £25).

□ This Sporting Life: Golf by Bill Elliott (David and Charles, £18.99).

□ Greg Norman The Biography by Lauren St John (Partridge Press £16.99).

□ Practical Greenkeeping by Jim Arthur (R & A, £29.95).

□ Challenges and Champions: The Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews 1754-1883 by John Behrend and Peter Lewis (R & A, £35).

Shedding new light on forgotten classic

Two names above all dominate the literature of chalkstream fly fishing — those of Frederic Halford and George Edward Mackenzie Skues. In the late 1800s, Halford produced *Dry Fly Fishing in Theory and Practice* and *Floating Flies and How to Dress Them*. Earlier this century, Skues gave us *The Way of a Trout with a Fly*, *Sidelines, Sidelights and Reflections* and a string of articles as long as his rod-arm. Each man, in his way, proved to be controversial. Each moved fly fishing forward. The debate rages still: who was the greater?

Reading Kenneth Robson's *The Essential GEM Skues*, one sees how futile this debate is, unless terms are defined. Both men were great, but in different ways and for different reasons. Halford systematised the art of dry fly fishing. Skues taught the fly fisher to think about his sport in a way and to a depth like no one had before. Halford, though not an innovator, influenced what anglers do worldwide. Skues, both innovator and observer,

FISHING
by Brian Clarke

has seen his influence confined largely to the cloistered world of the chalk streams — though what he taught is applicable wherever trout swim.

The value of Robson's book is that he has dusted down Skues' writing, distilled it, organised it and brought it back into the light. Anyone who looks at this book will learn. **□ The Carp Catchers Club**, edited by Maurice Ingham and Peter Rogers (Medlar Press, 560 cloth, £120 leather, £300 wellum). **□ Saltwater Flyfishing**, by Paul Morgan and Friends (Cochy-Bondur Books £19.95). **□ The Other Side of the Stream**, an evocative series of linked essays by C B McCully, and *Falling In Again*, the latest piece of whimsy from Chris Yates. **□ The Essential GEM Skues, by Kenneth Robson (A&C Black, £14.99). **□ The Carp Catchers Club**, edited by Maurice Ingham and Peter Rogers (Medlar Press, 560 cloth, £120 leather, £300 wellum). **□ Saltwater Flyfishing**, by Paul Morgan and Friends (Cochy-Bondur Books £19.95). **□ The Other Side of the Stream**, by C B McCully (Swan Hill, £6.95). **□ Falling In Again, by Chris Yates (Merlin Unwin, £17.99).****

Pain and pints on the longest road of all

You would not expect a short book from Bob Brown. He does not do things the short way. There are triathlons — sprints, Olympic distance, ironman — and there is the triathlon. There are those that are trimmings, but not the real turkey, and there is the triathlon, the toughest of them all. You swim, bike and run for a week or more, almost non-stop and at altitude in polluted Monterey. Then if, like Brown, you finish as high as fourth, you can spend six days watching the tail-enders come in.

Towards the end of the 24-mile swim, 1120-mile ride and 262-mile run — ten times the ironman distance — Brown was hallucinating. William Shakespeare's face had appeared in the sky and the trees were starting at broken Bob. "I can take it no more," he says, relating his experience in *The Road to Dece*. "I break down in tears. I think back and wonder what led me to this point." Too many beers, one suspects, reading this 319-page auto-

BIography
by David Powell

biography, an unusually long one for a sportsman. At times, the extraordinary mileage Brown covers in racing and training seems to be exceeded by the number of pints he sinks during countless related nighttime frolics. This is a story of slog and slurrp.

After running his first half-

marathon at the age of 13, Brown soon became hooked. He progressed from marathons, to standard triathlons, Hawaii ironman, triple ironman and, finally, deca.

Doing the deca, spending eight days and six hours conquering the brute, made him ill. "You can only go over the limit a certain number of times, then you are in the red," Brown says. "I am struggling to deal with that now. I am 29 going on 60. Since the race I have been suffering bad breathing problems, dizzy spells and passing out." Though partly a lively insight into the life of the no-mad, partying triathlete, the book never strays far away from the nitty-gritty of toil and sweat. In one sentence, Brown is enjoying a long embrace with a girl he has just met in New Zealand; in the next, he is running 13 miles up a mountain.

Goodness knows the lifetime mileage that Brown will clock up if he keeps going until he reaches Patrick Barnes's age of 83. In a memorable last line to *Tail of the Triathlon*, Barnes, in his delightful account of racing away from the sharp end, says: "I only saw one disabled man overtaking me on the swim. He shot past me like a bullet."

□ The Road to Dece, by Bob Brown (Backdoor Publishing, £10). **□ Tail of the Triathlon**, by Patrick Barnes (Wednesday Press, £5.99).

Centenary marked by fitting work

It is 20 years since Great Britain threatened to win the Davis Cup, when a team containing the present captain, David Lloyd, succumbed to the United States in the final at Palm Springs. Fittingly, the two nations that spawned the competition are to collide again in 1999, the year of the Davis Cup centenary, itself the topic of a fascinating work by Richard Evans.

Much has changed since Dwight Davis conceived a perpetual challenge cup, between players representing Britain and the United States, as a means to popularising what was then a relatively new game. "Dwight's little party" now dispensed by 130 nations and few authors are better qualified to chronicle this evolution than Evans, a man passionately committed to the sport's long-term health.

The Davis Cup was commissioned as part of the centenary celebrations and Evans has done his masters proud. From the foreword by John McEnroe through events of each decade to the 1990s, Evans has scripted a volume bristling with the raw energy that epitomises this gem of a team competition.

The author is never better than when reassembling the bones of an epic contest. Given the book's historical bent,

by Julian Muscat

Evans's vivid account of the politically-dominated "match" between the United States and a Paraguayan team vociferously supported by that country's notorious dictator, President Alfredo Stroessner, is diluted only by the absence of a date within 1,500 words of majestic prose.

Equally fascinating is the fallout from that first tie between Britain and the United States at the Longwood Cricket Club, Boston, in 1900.

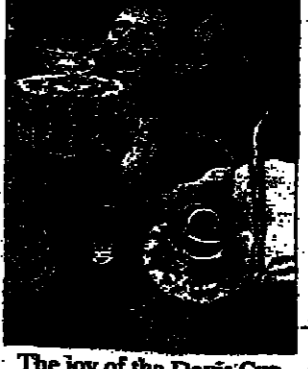
This book, a must for any aficionado, will also resonate with those drawn to the sport by the exploits of Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski. Indeed, this domestic surge of interest has doubtless prompted the publication of *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Tennis*, which targets the youthful audience now playing the game in greater numbers. In that respect, the formula of combining potted histories with lavish photographs makes this a more than suitable gift.

This is the work of another renowned writer in John Parsons. All encyclopedias require a measure of editorial judgment. In assessing the legends and Parsons has executed a difficult job well.

More could perhaps have been made of the chapters entitled *Scandals and Controversies* and *The Oddities of Tennis*, for they involve seminal moments that have profoundly altered the tennis landscape. Yet these are only minor criticisms of a volume that should educate and entertain in equal measure.

□ The Davis Cup, by Richard Evans (Doury Press, £14.99).

□ The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Tennis by John Parsons (Hodder and Stoughton, £19.99).



The joy of the Davis Cup

English sides of Europe bait of

LEGAL & PUBLIC

NOTICE PUBLISHED BY THE

SECTION 7(7) OF THE

ACT 1984

RUGBY UNION

English club sides offered European bait of £12m

FROM DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT, IN DUBLIN

THIS year began with England as an offshore territory, so far as European rugby was concerned, and it will end in the same way, despite the proposition yesterday that a full-blown competition next season would be worth around £30 million. Of that sum, competing English clubs could expect between £10 million and £12 million, according to Vernon Pugh, one of the directors of European Rugby Cup Ltd (ERC).

That is serious money for clubs still struggling with cash-flow problems, but there has been no indication this week that England's leading clubs are prepared to operate under an umbrella held by ERC and presently constituted, under the aegis, as chairman, of Tom Kiernan, the former Ireland full back, and Roger Pickering, the former England scrum half, who is tournament director. Such a stance, according to Pugh, who is also chairman of the International Rugby Board (IRB), is "pathetic, turning down that sort of money just because you don't like someone's face".

posed to the existing arrangements, when the final is played at the end of January.

"It's a desperate situation," Pugh said. "There is a European competition with a huge amount of money attached to it, the template is fine, it even has changes the English clubs wanted. I was hopelessly wrong because I thought people would come together and recognise that, whatever faults they find in the people and the system, there was a competition which guaranteed them a lot of money."

It is Pugh's belief that English broadcasters would contribute between £8 million and £9 million and French broadcasters a similar sum. ERC's sports marketing company, ISL, can guarantee £3 million from other sources. Other deals would bring in an additional £10 million and the participating clubs would remain free to arrange 50 per cent of the ground advertising. "English clubs would almost certainly end up with 35 to 40 per cent of that £30 million figure," Pugh said, thereby doubling what they might have received this season had they not withdrawn. "With the BBC struggling to find sports for their schedules, you could have European rugby shown terrestrially and live. Think what that could do for the profile of the game. It just isn't factually correct for the English to claim the three Celtic countries have ganged up against them. If they can tell me what's so unfair about it, let's sit down and talk about it."

The structure of ERC and relationships between the governing bodies and the English clubs are at the heart of the dispute that took Francis Baron, the Rugby Football Union's chief executive, to Dublin yesterday and will bring Welsh Rugby Union officials there today. The two unions have to answer to the IRB's disciplinary panel, which believes its bylaws have been infringed. The debate lasted nine hours before being adjourned until this morning. The IRB is expected to announce its findings next week.



Nicol regains the captaincy and his place at scrum half for Bath against Saracens, as they attempt to break a run of four defeats

Sevens hit for six by new era

RADICAL changes to the structure of the Middlesex Sevens tournament are being proposed to meet the changing demands of the professional game.

A think-tank has agreed plans that would see a seven-a-side competition open only to clubs from the county being staged in May, with a 16-club Middlesex National Charity Sevens at Twickenham in August involving 12 Premiership clubs, three guest entrants as well as the winners of the Middlesex Sevens themselves.

Cherie's cheer While Tony Blair was off to his big fixture at the EU summit in Vienna last week, his wife, Cherie, was supporting their youngest son, Nicholas, 12, who was playing for The London Oratory in the Middlesex under-13 schools final against Haberdashers' Aske's.

much time to celebrate. She made a swift exit saying: "I must get back to chambers."

Almost a year after the Brive v Pontypridd debacle, Caerphilly were expecting a hostile reception when they met the French side in the European Shield at the weekend. Not a bit of it. They were treated royally and only realised why when they looked at the match programme, which listed the Welsh side as Caerphilly (Irelande)!

Lost and found Bryn Thomas, the Whitland scrum half, almost failed to make his first-team debut in the recent Welsh League second division match away to Llanharan. The young Cardiff law student somehow ended up ten miles away, at Abercromby's ground, where the home side were entertaining Wrexham.



More instances of "own tries" have landed on Loose Talk's desk. This one, though, is with a difference and involved Tyrone Hanlon, the Old Gaytonians loosehead prop.

In a recent home game, Hanlon objected to a penalty awarded against his side on the halfway line and let the ref know his feelings. Another ten metres were added to the penalty and Hanlon let rip with another verbal blast. This happened repeatedly until, five metres from the line, the opposing scrum half tried to tap the ball, only for Hanlon, in a red mist, to bowl him over. Penalty try! Who said props weren't bright?

Calling all Exiles Wales are hoping that another batch of Colin Charvis could be lurking undiscovered somewhere in England. If so, the Welsh Exiles, an organisation dedicated to unearthing Wales-qualified talent aged between 16 and 21, is anxious to unearth them. Anyone born in the Principality, or with a Welsh parent or grandparent, can contact Peter Taylor, the Exiles secretary, on 01932 857433. Taylor said: "Charvis was living and playing rugby in the Midlands before he was discovered. We want to ensure that talent like that doesn't slip through the net."

MARK SOUSTER

Cardiff and Swansea are fined £150,000

BY MARK SOUSTER

CARDIFF and Swansea were fined £150,000 each last night by the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) after an all-day hearing. The clubs were punished for pulling out of the Welsh League premier division and for their refusal to sign a ten-year loyalty agreement in favour of a series of unofficial friendlies against sides in the first division of the Allied Dunbar Premiership.

The WRU will hope that its actions will satisfy the International Rugby Board, which has summoned the union to Dublin today to answer charges over its handling of the ongoing conflict with the clubs. After a run of four defeats that has equalled Bath's worst sequence in league history, Andy Robinson, the coach, has rung the changes for the visit tomorrow of Saracens to the Recreation Ground. Since October, Bath have tumbled from the top of the Allied Dunbar Premiership to fifth, with Robinson having to endure unprecedented criticism.

In the absence of Richard Webster, through injury, Andy Nicol, who led the side last season, regains the captaincy and scrum half berth in place of Steve Hatley. Webster will not play again for several weeks after fracturing his eye socket during the game against Northampton. Ben Sturman and Iwan Evans are dropped, while Stephen Borthwick, 19, a Bath University student, makes his league debut at lock forward.

Borthwick, who played in the England Under-21 defeat of South Africa earlier this month, replaces Sturman, who reverts to the bench, while Iain Balshaw switches from full back to right wing, in place of Evans, who does not even figure in the 22-man squad. Matt Perry regains the No 15 jersey, having recovered from concussion.

Gloucester give a full league debut to Kingsley Jones as they face Leicester, the leaders, at Kingsholm. Chris Catling returns at full back for his first game for six weeks. London Irish host Harlequins and have brought in Mike Howe and Krystian Fullman to the front row, while Rob Gallacher takes over at No 8.

Ulster were celebrating yesterday after being given permission to stage their European Cup semi-final against Stade Français at Ravenhill. Safety experts were satisfied with plans for two temporary stands that will increase capacity to 20,000. Ulster should learn today the date and time for the game.

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SWIMMING

Palmer's lack of condition exposed

By CRAIG LORD

AS THE European champion, Paul Palmer is not used to finishing fourth in a domestic field of freestylers, yet, when he did so behind Andrew Clayton, his Bath team-mate, in the 200 metres at the British winter championships in Glasgow last night, he declared himself pleased for someone who is "unshaven, unfit and too fat".

Palmer's self-assessment was somewhat harsh, yet it put his first race since the summer in perspective; while those around him were shaved and tapered down from hard training, Palmer stood out, sporting, as he did, a stubbly chest and an athletic body suit.

In the lane next to him was James Hickman, one of the fastest butterfly swimmers in the world, honed and fresh

kick out of the wall into the last length put him half a body-length up on Palmer, who could not respond.

Clayton held on to win in 1min 47.44sec, with Hickman second in 1min 47.95sec and Edward Sinclair, of Millfield, finishing fast for third place in a time of 1min 48.16sec. Palmer recorded a time of 1min 48.46sec.

Palmer praised Clayton, a fellow member of the Great Britain relay squad that won the European 200 metres relay title last year and finished third at the world championships in January. "That's great for Andy. He's worked hard — it's good to see him do that, he really needed it," Palmer said.

Palmer will today race the 400 metres, the distance over which he won the bronze medal at the world championships last January and for which he hopes to qualify for the world short-course championships, in Hong Kong in April.

By then, Bath could well spell Britain, because Clayton, Stevens and Brinn, showing no ill-effects from their efforts in the 200 metres freestyle, were joined by Simon Handley as they retained the 100 metres freestyle relay title in 3min 16.55sec, only 0.08sec outside the British record, which was set by the national squad last year.

One of the best swimmers of the day came from Darren Wigg, of Newcastle. The 19-year-old came within a second of Hickman's British record to win the 400 metres medley in 4min 17.45sec. Alison Sheppard gave the home crowd something to cheer about by slicing more than a second off the Scottish record in two swims in the heats and semi-finals of the 100 metres freestyle, her best effort leaving the standard at 54.94sec. No one in Scotland had broken 56sec before yesterday. The final is today.



Annette Lewis keeps a firm grip on Gold Horizon and the teddy bear baton in the Family Pairs relay at Olympia

Age no bar to Grannusch

By JENNY MACARTHUR

JOHN WHITAKER, on Virtual Village Grannusch, the horse on which he won the first two legs of the World Cup final in Helsinki in April, took the Peplian Stakes, the main event of the first afternoon of the Olympia championships after a vintage display of jumping on the 19-year-old gelding.

Whitaker's management of old horses — particularly Grannusch, on which he has won more than £500,000 — is a byword in the sport of show-jumping. Although this win netted him a mere £1,200, it gave Whitaker untold pleasure.

"I had thought of retiring Grannusch last year, but he just keeps jumping as well as ever," he said. They had three wins at the Bremen Show in Germany in October and a third in Paris last month.

Even so, the elderly horse had not been expected to rout

this distinguished field with quite such ease. Lesley McNaught, of Switzerland, the first to go over the ten-fence course, got round in 48.18sec on her Russian-bred stallion, Bin II, and this looked as if it would be good enough, even in a 34-strong class, as several seasoned partnerships, including Geoff Billington, on Nito, and Robert Smith, on Senator For The Best, hit the last fence.

Nick Skelton and Showtime, the winners last year, bowed out with 12 faults and although Michael Whitaker made a bold challenge on Virtual Village Hilton, he was just outside McNaught's time.

With Skelton out of the way Whitaker, the 26th to go, knew that he was in with a chance. With the audience

urging him on, he executed the fastest and most stylish round of the day to finish 0.71sec ahead of McNaught, to thunderous applause. "I knew I had to ignore the shouting and keep concentrating because so many had hit the last fence," Whitaker said.

Despite this early success, Whitaker will almost certainly ride Wellam, who is now back in competition after a nine-month lay-off, in the World Cup qualifier tomorrow. "Grannusch is such a trier and puts everything into his jumping — I don't want to overstretch him by asking too much," Whitaker said.

Earlier, Pippa Funnell, on Henkie, and her husband, William, on Comex, gained a second win in the Peplian Family Pair Relay final after completing the only double-clear round. The success was

SNOOKER

Hendry is left speechless by defeat

FROM PHIL YATES IN DUBLIN

THE most frustrating year in the career of Stephen Hendry ended in abject disappointment yesterday when he was beaten 5-4 by Tony Drago in the quarter-finals of the Irish Open here at the National Basketball Arena.

Last week, after losing 5-2 to Drago at the corresponding stage of the German Masters, Hendry said that he would retire unless his form showed signs of improvement. The Scot, who admitted later that those remarks had been ill-considered, said nothing of that nature after the rematch. In fact, his response to six questions at an obligatory press conference consisted of a single word.

Asked if he was disappointed, Hendry rasped: "Shrewd." The remainder of questions were answered with shoulder shrugs, facial expressions, hand gestures and body language that left no one present in any doubt as to how hard he had taken the defeat.

Drago compiled a break of 106 in the third frame, but when Hendry established a 4-2 lead, he looked firmly on course for revenge and the semi-finals. A red-to-pink clearance enabled Drago, the world No 10, to snatch the seventh frame, but Hendry was again on the threshold of progress when he established a 6-0 advantage in the eighth. He missed a routine red, however, and Drago eventually cleared the colours to draw level at 4-4 on the back.

Hendry also controlled the deciding frame, but when the six-times world champion left the last red perched on the tip of a ball pocket, Drago fashioned a 30 clearance to dramatically win on the black. He will meet Alan McManus or Billy Snaddon in the semi-finals.

While Drago's success was warmly received by the Irish crowd, a 5-1 defeat, for Ken Doherty, the local hero, at the hands of Mark Williams, was not. Williams lost the opening frame, but made amends with subsequent contributions of 48, 53, 44, 40, 133 and 55. He now plays John Parrott or Stephen Lee.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Singh casts doubts aside to claim gold

BOXING: Dengko Singh, of India, gave his country its first boxing gold medal in the Asian Games for 16 years in Bangkok yesterday. (Srikumar Sen writes.) Despite winning a gold medal in the King's Cup in Bangkok last year against the best in the world, Singh, a bantamweight, who comes from the north-eastern state of Manipur, was taken out of the squad by the Indian Government because it did not believe that he had a chance of winning a medal at the games.

However, boxing officials made a collection to pay for his trip and Singh was called up just two hours before the plane with his team colleagues was about to leave. After beating the favourite, Soranya Wongpragob, of Thailand, Dengko faced Timur Tulyakov, of Uzbekistan in the final. Tulyakov was unable to come out for the fourth round.

WRESTLING: Nigel Wright is aiming to make giant strides after trading water for five years at Wigan. Wright, who, at 19, became the most expensive teenager in the game, started on a new career path yesterday after joining Huddersfield Giants on a two-year contract.

Huddersfield staved off competition from Sheffield Eagles and Wakefield Trinity, Wright's former club, to land the former Great Britain Under-21 player, who was released from a four-year contract by Wigan after a series of injuries.

ATHLETICS: Ludmila Engquist, 34, the Olympic and world-100 metres women's hurdles champion from Sweden, wants to compete at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City in the two-person bobsleigh. The Russian-born naturalised Swede also expects to defend her Olympic title in Sydney. "This is not a joke," Johan, her husband and coach, said. "We have been in contact with the bobsleigh coaches."

Results, page 50

Results

from success at the European short-course championships and ready to take on the best of Bath in an alien discipline. Yet not even his dashing turns could help Hickman overcome the pincer movement of the Bath quartet of Clayton, Palmer, Mark Stevens and Sion Brinn.

The early leader was Stevens, the defending champion, who took the race out in foot-racing fashion. Stevens survived until the sixth of the eight lengths, when the pack, separated by no more than a stroke between the seven men, washed past him like a wave.

As Stevens fell back and with Hickman still watching Palmer, Clayton edged ahead down the seventh length, the efficiency of his smooth, long stroke helping him to gain enough of an advantage to avoid having the race stolen from him by one of Hickman's phenomenal turns. Indeed, the Leeds swimmer's dolphin

NETBALL: MIDDLESEX BOAST EXPERIENCE IN MEETING OF UNBEATEN COUNTIES

Sdao looks forward to reunion

LUCIA SDAO, the former England vice-captain, admits that there will be no room for sentiment when she lines up for Middlesex in their crucial county championship match against Derbyshire at Trent Park tomorrow (Cathy Harris writes). Raised in Derbyshire, Sdao represented the county for ten years, but she is adamant that her adopted team will triumph.

Neither side has won the

title and both are unbeaten. Although Bedfordshire also have an undefeated record, Sdao said: "This is the big one. They are an important scalp. They haven't really come up against a strong defence, while, for me, it'll be a personal battle against old team-mates."

After an impressive start to the season, which included victory over Essex Met, the holders, Derbyshire could find the going a little tougher

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Begin Bridge with The Times
Lesson 36 - Raising Partner

Now it is time to look at the action from responder's point of view. Partner opens the bidding; how should you respond?

We have mentioned before that the purpose of bidding is to decide on both the denomination and the level of the final contract. If you have good support for the suit partner has opened, you already know what the final denomination should be — his suit. Tell him so by raising his suit. In major suit you are looking for an eight-card fit; since partner needs four to open, you need four to support him.

Whenever you have four-card support for partner's major you should always raise his suit immediately.

When you raise partner's suit you are defining your hand quite precisely in one bid — it is another example of a limit bid. With 6-8 HCP you make a single raise; with 9-11 you make a jump raise; and with 12-14 you make a double jump raise.

What do you respond to your partner's One Spade opening with the following hands:

(A) ♠ K765 (B) ♠ A876 (C) ♠ 8743
♥ K542 ♥ 85 ♥ A K J 105
♦ 82 ♦ Q J 76 ♦ 78
♣ 878 ♣ K53 ♣ Q8

(D) ♠ A K J (E) ♠ A Q 8 5 (F) ♠ J 8 7 5 4
♥ 8 7 6 5 ♥ K 8 3 ♥ 8
♦ 8 7 6 ♦ A 8 7 6 ♦ A K 6 5
♣ 8 5 3 ♣ 8 3 ♣ 8 7 4

Hand (A) is a minimum raise of One Spade to Two. Hand (B) is an ace stronger and you should tell partner so by jumping to Three Spades. Inexperienced players often make the mistake of bidding hearts on Hand (C). When you have already found one eight-card major-suit fit there is no need to look for another. Bid Three Spades. If you respond "Two Hearts" partner will never believe you hold four spades with him.

Although your spades are very strong on Hand (D), there is no reason to suppose partner has five cards in the suit. Respond One No-Trump (more of that later). With Hand (E) you have enough for game (13 + 12 = 25). Go all the way to Four Spades.

On Hand (F) you should respond Three Spades. Your maximum in HCP, allied to five-card trump support, a singleton and an ace-king outside make this hand worth an upgrade. In a future article I will discuss how to add points for distributional features on unbalanced hands.

There are some exceptions to this when you are very strong which we will deal with later.

If you can get a copy of any lesson from this beginners' course by sending two 26p stamps per lesson (or five stamps per set) to Sally Brock, 73 Totteridge Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 7QA. Don't forget to state which ones you want.

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

K v K

I conclude my coverage of the blitz match between Garry Kasparov and Vladimir Kramnik, celebrating the presence in London of Kasparov this week, with two further wins by Kramnik from a match that ended with honours even: White: Vladimir Kramnik Black: Garry Kasparov Blitz match, Moscow 1998

Semi-Slav Defence

1. Nf3 c5
2. d4 Nf6
3. Nc3 e6
4. Bg5 Nb7
5. cxd5 Nxd5
6. Bc4 Nc6
7. e3 d6
8. Bb3 Nbd7
9. Qd2 Be7
10. 0-0-0 Nc5
11. Bb5 Nc6
12. a3 Bg4
13. Re1 Bb7
14. Bb2 Bc8
15. Bb1 Nc5
16. Bb2 Nc6
17. Bb1 Nc5
18. Bb2 Nc6
19. Bb1 Nc5
20. Bb2 Nc6
21. Bb1 Nc5
22. Bb2 Nc6
23. Bb1 Nc5
24. Bb2 Nc6
25. Bb1 Nc5
26. Bb2 Nc6
27. Bb1 Nc5
28. Bb2 Nc6
29. Bb1 Nc5
30. Bb2 Nc6
31. Bb1 Nc5
32. Bb2 Nc6
33. Bb1 Nc5
34. Bb2 Nc6
35. Bb1 Nc5
36. Bb2 Nc6
37. Bb1 Nc5
38. Bb2 Nc6
39. Bb1 Nc5
40. Bb2 Nc6
41. Bb1 Nc5
42. Bb2 Nc6
43. Bb1 Nc5
44. Bb2 Nc6
45. Bb1 Nc5
46. Bb2 Nc6
47. Bb1 Nc5
48. Bb2 Nc6
49. Bb1 Nc5
50. Bb2 Nc6

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

PANCHAMA
a. A pariah
b. A sage
c. Ritual fasting

RINCEAU
a. A little stream
b. A spiral
c. A verse form

SARON
a. A long skirt
b. A dragon
c. A percussion instrument

OGOPOGO
a. A water monster
b. A balancing game
c. A mythical tribe

Answers on page 50

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Nimzovitsch — Floss, Zurich, 1906. Black must have fancied his chances here. He threatens mate on g2, the white knight on g4 is pinned and Black also has the possibility of ... Rh6. How did White turn the tables?

Solution on page 50

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What's in it for me?

Faltering England grateful for Australia captain's largesse
Enter Taylor bearing gifts

FROM ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
IN CANBERRA

CANBERRA (England XI beat Prime
Minister's XI by 16 runs

A PICNIC match for politi-
cians was not designed to lift
England's flagging spirits and
nor did it prove to be ideally
timed for its principal patron,



Holloiako, who took some heavy punishment, did produce one exemplary delivery to beat Hodge's expansive drive

Half an hour into this annual jamboree, England were endorsing their reputation so faithfully that the game seemed highly unlikely to last beyond its prime function of lunch. At 26 for four, with only two specialist batsmen remaining, a little local embarrassment was being heaped on the national indignity of the touring team.

Plainly, this did not surprise the majority. The bookmaker who set up shop just inside the main gate, with a binocular to make Australia's harried cricketing administration wince, had cheerfully priced the Prime Minister's XI at 2-1 on favourites. This despite the fact that it contained one, singularly off-duty Test player, along with six who are unsure of places in their state sides.

England took the festive gifts gratefully, on the basis that it was a small mercy as to which of Hick or John Crawley should survive in the Test team, but both failed here, along with Bern Hollioako, the all-rounder who should be putting them under pressure.

Stewart, his feet moving more freely after his second innings in Adelaide, put on 59 with Nasser Hussain, whose form has been admirable all through the tour. From 107 for six, though, it required the pluck and invention of Warren Hegg to confirm that there was nothing too menacing about pitch or bowling.

Hegg last played in the opening first-class fixture in Perth, but he is likely to be included again tomorrow. Stewart, however, dismisses the theory that he could take over as wicket-keeper in the fourth Test. "There are no plans for that at all," he said.

Once Alan Mullally had plucked out the two rising West Australians, Campbell and Karich, without scoring, England were in control. Andrew Symonds briefly hinted at reopening old wounds and Corey Richards showed the strokeplay that has brought him four centuries this season, but when Taylor was sixth out at 105, the game looked to be over.

Daniel Marsh, the son of former Test wicketkeeper, Rodney, played the innings of the day to keep the occasion alive, his 74 coming from 73 balls.

Graeme Hick's off spin secured the win in the penultimate over, just in time to allow Stewart to pretend that he was about to reciprocate Taylor's gesture by bowling the last over himself.

SCOREBOARD FROM CANBERRA

Table with columns for ENGLAND XI, PRIME MINISTER'S XI, and individual player statistics including runs, wickets, and bowling figures.

MAGIC NUMBERS
What could be more desirable for anyone with sporting blood in their veins? The Times is again offering a bottle of Taittinger champagne to those who contribute a magic number for Christmas. A magic number is one that carries immense sporting weight and every year throws up new ones.

Fog lifts Zimbabwe hopes

THE third and final Test match between Pakistan and Zimbabwe failed to get under way in Faisalabad yesterday because of foggy weather, leaving the tourists in sight of a series win. The umpires — Douglas Cowie, of New Zealand, and Salim Badar, of Pakistan, called off play after carrying out eight inspections.

After lunch, the conditions did improve, but it was still unplayable from one end," Cowie said. Weather reports suggested that the fog was likely to persist.

FOR THE RECORD

A grid of sports news snippets under various headings: BASKETBALL, FOOTBALL, GOLF, ICE HOCKEY, RUGBY UNION, SNOOKER, SWIMMING, and FIXTURES.

WORD WATCHING

Answers from page 48
(a) A member of the fifth division of early Indian society, outside the four main divisions of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vasiya and Sudra. A pariah, an outcaste. RINCEAU

OLD SPECKLED HEN
A perfect combination of smoothness and strength, with a subtle blend of flavours.
A most Gratifying Ale.
Brewed by Morland of Abingdon. Est'd. 1711.

TELEVISION CHOICE
The wall and Y-fronts?

The Romans in Britain
BBC2, 7.30pm
Guy de la Bedoyere, our man on the motor cycle, concludes his survey of the Roman occupation at Hadrian's Wall. We all know from our schooldays that the wall was built to keep out the marauding Scots. Not so, apparently. There is no evidence of any warfare along the wall, only of gambling and beer drinking. This suggests that the wall was built more as a statement of military supremacy than to deter aggressors.

Profile of John Cale, a founder member of Velvet Underground (BBC2, 11.30pm)



Nothing in John Cale's background suggested that he would end up in the avant-garde of 1960s music, help to found the Velvet Underground and become a prominent resident of the Andy Warhol 'East Village'.

Nothing in John Cale's background suggested that he would end up in the avant-garde of 1960s music, help to found the Velvet Underground and become a prominent resident of the Andy Warhol 'East Village'. The film pays deserved tribute to a woman's alertness and courage and celebrates a happy outcome which for a long time looked inconceivable.

In Extreme Danger
BBC1, 8.30pm

Normally best known for an exceptional number of secondhand bookshops, Hay-on-Wye made news of a different kind when Mark Williams, a psychotic prisoner out on home leave, terrorised the town and held ten people hostage in the dental surgery. The steps lasted for 15 hours and finally ended when Joan Davies, the dental hygienist, saw Williams nodding off and grabbed his gun. In the established format of In Extreme Danger the incident is recalled through dramatic reconstruction and eye-witness accounts and makes a gripping tale. The film pays deserved tribute to a woman's alertness and courage and celebrates a happy outcome which for a long time looked inconceivable.

Gardening Neighbours
BBC2, 8.30pm

The three-month project to transform the eight Sheffield gardens is almost complete. It remains only to add the minute touches before the garden is allowed in (all proceeds to charity) to view the results. But first there is a special piece of business for Steve and Catriona at number seven. Following a pagan ritual, they bury the afterbirth of their recently-arrived baby and plant a birch tree on the spot. Finally it is time for the Lady Maypoores to cut a tape and let the people in. The impression, though it is conveyed ever so gently, is that the residents of Kenbourne Grove will very glad when the cameras have gone and they can enjoy their new gardens in peace. Except that without television, their gardens would still, with notable exceptions, be jungles of misty wastes. Before and after shots reveal the extent of the makeovers.

RADIO CHOICE

The Friday Play: The Last Explorer
Radio 4, 9.00pm
An intriguing and clever new play by Michael Hastings, set around 1950, which draws together unlikely characters and several seemingly irreconcilable story lines into a convincing whole. Brian Fawcett (Nicholas le Prevost) is an upper-class and restless Brit obsessed with discovering the fate of his father, lost 25 years before in the Amazon jungle. In New York, visiting Hal, a lecture-tour agent (Stacy Keach), Fawcett meets a sassy journalist, Beatrice (Lorelei King). They fall in love, much to the chagrin of Hal, who carries a torch for Beatrice. But Fawcett's self-deception and his paternal fixation undermine the relationship. Events produce a resolution that is at the same time sad yet fulfilling. Peter Barnard

Afternoon Play: Grounded
Radio 4, 2.15pm

The first of two very good, very different, plays today will find an echo for the millions of people who form relationships early in their lives but are forced to maintain them later in life via the mail. Janet (Helen Atkinson Wood) writes to her old friend Pam, to explain why the latter was not invited to the former's wedding. From that base there unfolds a satirical, witty tale of a life which is chaotic and utterly beyond the control of the person living it: broken marriages and delinquent children are only two of the elements that emerge as the wreckage along the way, much of the trouble caused by the fact that Janet, a graduate of teaching college, has been a student that sits uneasily with her innate sense of superiority.

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zoe Ball 9.00am Simon Mayo's Office Party 12.00pm Kevin Greening 2.00pm Mark Radcliffe 4.00pm Chris Moyles 5.45pm Newsnight 6.00pm Pat Topping's Essential Selection 9.00pm Judge Jules 11.00pm Westwood Radio 1 Rap Show 2.00am Fabio and Grooverider 4.00am Emma B

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30am Waka Uka to Wogan 6.30pm Ken Bruce 12.00pm Jimmy Young 2.00pm Ed Stewart 5.05pm Denis Lynan 7.00pm Hubert Gregg 7.30pm Friday Night is Music 8.15pm Wuthering Heights (R7) 9.30pm Listen to the Band 10.00pm David Jacquot 10.30pm Sheridan Morley 12.00pm Lynn Parsons 4.00am Lulu Sharma

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00am Breakfast with Julian Worlock and Victoria Derbyshire 8.00am Nick Campbell 12.00pm The Midday News with Sue MacGregor and John Humphrys 4.00pm Drive with Peter Allen and Jane Garvey 7.00pm Extra 7.30pm Alan Green's Sportnight: Alan Green and studio guests debate the week's sporting action and look ahead to the weekend 11.00pm Late Night Live with Brian Hayes 1.00am All Night with Richard Dalton

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans 9.30am Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Abbot 4.00pm Hamlet Scott 7.00pm Wheels of Steel 11.00pm James Martin 2.00am Paul Coyte

TALK RADIO

6.00am Bill Overton & Clare Catford 9.00pm Scott Chisholm 12.00pm Lorraine Kelly 2.00pm Anna Reesum 4.00pm Peter Dinkley 5.00pm The Sports Zone 9.00pm Mike Allen 2.00am Mike Dixon

BBC WORLD SERVICE

5.00am The World Today 7.00pm 7.15pm Off the Shelf: Playback 8.00pm Music Review 8.10pm Focus for Thought 8.15pm Westway 8.30pm John Peel 9.00pm News (648 only) News in German 9.05pm World Business Report 9.15pm Early Versions 9.30pm Speaking of English 9.45pm Sports Round-Up 10.00pm Newsdesk 10.30pm Assignment 11.00pm Newsdesk 11.30pm Focus on Faith 12.00pm News 12.05pm World Business Report 12.15pm Britain Today 12.30pm World Sports Round-Up 1.00pm Newshour 2.00pm 2.05pm Outlook 2.30pm Multitrack Alternative 3.00pm Britain Today 3.00pm People and Politics Footpath Extra 3.15pm To Be Continued 3.30pm Sports in Action 4.00pm News 4.15pm On You Behalf 4.30pm Insight (648 only) News in German 4.45pm Britain Today 5.00pm Europe Today 5.30pm World Business Report 5.35pm Sports Round-Up 5.30pm Science in Action 4.00pm Newsdesk 4.30pm Weekend

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Bailey's Easter Breakfast. Music to get the day off to a fine start 8.00am Harry Kaly. The Hall of Fame Top 100. 11.00pm favourite pieces voted for in the Classic FM Top 100 12.00pm Lorraine Kelly. Jane Jones plays favourite music 2.00pm Concerto. Barbara Doube Concerto in A major 3.00pm Jane Crook Concerto in G major plus recital of Liszt and Chopin 6.30pm Newsnight. Top stories and interviews with guests from the arts world. Presented by John Burningham 7.00pm Smooth Classics at Seven. John Burningham introduces classic sounds 8.00pm Evening Concerto. The Beatles and Harry Connors. 9.00pm (Stereo). Lisa (The Christmas Tree) 11.00pm Mann at Night 2.00am Concerto in 3.00pm Mark Griffiths

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air. Includes Greg (Pier Gynt Suite No 1); Copland (Old American Songs) 9.00am Masterworks Handel (Concerto a due con No 3 in F); Mahler (Ruckert-Lieder); Mozart (Concerto in Sol); Schubert (Symphony of Festivity) 10.30am Artist of the Week: David Willcocks 11.00pm Sound Stories: Castles and Palaces — The White Palace, St Petersburg 12.00pm Composer of the Week: Beethoven (Symphony No. 1) 1.00pm The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert: Leonarda Ruthman, flute; Julius Drake piano; Faure David (Violin); Debussy (Symphony); Poulenc (Flute Sonata) 2.00pm The BBC Orchestra BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Grant Llewellyn, live in piano, Derek Wright conductor, BBC National Chorus of Wales, Stravinsky (Symphony of Festivity) 3.00pm Young Artists: Shostakovich (Tatish Trol); Copland (Quiet City); Rachmaninov (Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini); Stravinsky (Symphony in Three Movements); Beethoven (Chorale Fantasy) 4.00pm Music Restored (7) 4.45pm Music Machine with Verity Sharp 5.00pm Tune Live from the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, London. Sean Rafferty presents the last programme of 1998

RADIO 4

6.00am World News 5.35pm Shipping Forecast 5.40pm Farming Forecast 5.45pm Prayer for the Day 5.47pm Taming Today with Charlotte Smith 6.00pm Today with Sue MacGregor and John Humphrys 8.35pm (LW) Yearstoday in Parliament Update from Westminster 9.00pm Desert Island Discs The novelist Dick Francis looks back on a lifetime's achievements (7) 9.45pm (FM) Serial: Dear Bill W.F. Deedes reads the last extracts from his autobiography 9.45pm (LW) An Act of Worship 10.00pm Women's Hour With Jenni Murray and guests 11.00pm Strictly Conventional Quentin Cooper joins members of the Association of British Travel Agents, who have gathered on the Costa del Sol. Last in series (4/4) 11.30pm The Smart Couple: Appearance Can Be Deceptive: The novelist Annabel Selous is on a burglary at an art gallery. David Joss Buckley's drama, starring James Fleet, Hadyn Gwynne and John Walton (7) 12.00pm (FM) News 12.04pm You and Yours Liz Barclay and John Vale tackle more consumer concerns 12.00pm (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast 1.00pm Today with Sue MacGregor and John Humphrys 1.30pm Screen Test Brian Sibley revisits Cardiff's Chapter Arts Centre to cheer the semi-finals of the FA Cup 2.00pm The Archers (7) 2.15pm Afternoon Play: Grounded by Elizabeth Beales. Starring Helen Atkinson Wood. See Choice 3.00pm Making History Roger Wilkes helps listeners research their own historical mysteries 3.30pm Startoff on Honour David Stafford profiles the life of the late Admiral Lord Mountbatten and Mark Rowley writes. Last in series (4/4) 3.45pm Feedback Another selection of listeners' letters 4.00pm Open Book Humphrey Carpenter talks to the

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.8-99.8. RADIO 2. FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3. FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4. FM 92.4-94.8. LW 198. RADIO 5 LIVE. MW 893. 909. WORLD SERVICE. MW 893. LW 1245.5 (555m). CLASSIC FM. FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO. FM 105.8; MW 1167. 1215. TALK RADIO. MW 1058; LW 1089. TELEVISION. Radio Listings compiled by Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomas, Jane Gregory and John McNamee.

Cruising for a bruising in the labs of war

This is the way the run ends, not with a bang, but a whimper...

Government, it seems, believing they will have no rival superpower for 15 to 20 years...

simulate a nuclear explosion, produces an electric pulse of fifty trillion watts in one hundred billionths of a second.

As our reviewer, Peter Waymark, pointed out, there is nothing original about the emergency medical situation...

Last night the crew of Matheron Station went to attend the casualties of a riot at the local prison.

manipulative, self-serving, buck-passing, unjust, smarmy git got his comeuppance at the end...

The conflict between the honest, practical hands-on staff and the manipulative, cost-cutting, systems-obsessed manager...



Whatever the faults of the ITV companies, they seem to be able to produce gritty, middle-of-the-road drama about gritty middle-of-the-road people...

Table with 2 columns: Time and Program Name. Includes BBC, HTV, and CENTRAL channels.

Table with 2 columns: Time and Program Name. Includes HTV and CENTRAL channels.

Table with 2 columns: Time and Program Name. Includes CENTRAL and CHANNEL 4 channels.

Table with 2 columns: Time and Program Name. Includes CHANNEL 4 and CHANNEL 5 channels.

Table with 2 columns: Time and Program Name. Includes CHANNEL 5 and other channels.

Table with 2 columns: Time and Program Name. Includes CHANNEL 5 and other channels.

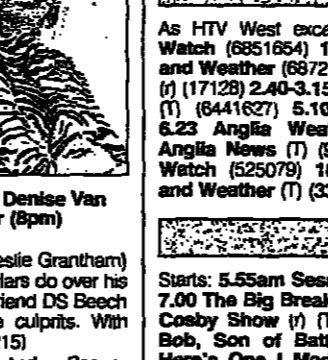
Table with 2 columns: Time and Program Name. Includes CHANNEL 5 and other channels.



Leslie Grantham and Denise Van Outen guest star (8pm)



Perf Giffin stars as Freston's assistant (10pm)



A scientist monitors a tornado as it strikes the ground (8pm)

Table with 2 columns: Time and Program Name. Includes SKY 1 and SKY PREMIER channels.

Table with 2 columns: Time and Program Name. Includes SKY SPORTS 2 and SKY CINEMA channels.

Table with 2 columns: Time and Program Name. Includes SKY SPORTS 3 and SKY CINEMA channels.

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CHRISTMAS TV IN Vision THIS SATURDAY EIGHT-DAY GUIDE

CRICKET 50

Taylor's generosity allows England some much-needed respite



SPORT

EQUESTRIANISM 48

Whitaker makes spirited start to annual jamboree at Olympia



FRIDAY DECEMBER 18 1998

United feeling the title pressure Chelsea nose ahead in two-horse race

By OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

THEY collided with each other like angry Titans on Wednesday night and fought each other to a standstill. Their 1-1 draw told us more about Chelsea than it did about Manchester United and even if the match did not quite live up to the hyperbole that preceded it, it carried enough significance to suggest that the second half of this season that began in the lee of the World Cup may be far more enthralling than the first.

United and Chelsea will go into the crowded, hectic festive programme, which effectively begins this weekend, as the rightful favourites to win the FA Carling Premiership. They play each other again in just 11 days from now, at Stamford Bridge, and, if there is a winner next time, they will be the team for the rest to beat.

It has been a long, hard few weeks for United. Their fixture list over the past month reads like a Who's Who of European football. Barcelona, Leeds United, Tottenham Hotspur, Aston Villa, Bayern Munich and Chelsea have all launched themselves at Alex Ferguson and his side.

Yesterday, United staggered out on the other side like a storm-tossed ship suddenly becalmed. Things would get easier from here, Ferguson, the United manager, said, after Wednesday night's rugged draw with Gianfranco Zola and the men in blue, because the schedule thins out and his players have more recovery time. "That will suit us," he said, with a hint of menace.

Now, in fact, is the time for the rest of the Premiership to hold its breath. It seems to have been waiting since the start of a season for one team to explode into life, to hurl down the gauntlet. Aston Villa have exceeded all expectations

TOP OF TABLE

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aston Villa	17	9	6	2	27	17	33
Leeds	17	9	5	3	34	20	31
Chelsea	17	7	9	1	27	17	30
Leeds	17	6	8	3	28	18	28
Manchester United	17	6	8	3	27	18	28
Arsenal	17	6	6	5	23	10	24
West Ham	17	5	5	7	23	21	23
Wimbledon	17	5	5	7	22	26	23

as they cling to their lead, but to scan their substitutes' bench on any given day is to fear for the longevity of their challenge. They, like Leeds, are not yet ready to grasp the big prize, even if they are warning of triumphs soon to come.

The worry for the rest is that United, the quest for the European Cup behind them until they meet Internazionale and Ronaldo in the quarter-finals at the beginning of March, will shift into a higher gear in the ten weeks between now and then and accelerate away from the chasing pack. They are second as it is, just two points behind Villa, and most of their best play has been reserved for the Champions' League.

They have a better, deeper



Zola: brilliant form

squad than they had last season, too. They have Jesper Blomqvist to deputise when Ryan Giggs is tired or not fit, they have Teddy Sheringham and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer pushing Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole for their places, five world-class midfield players chasing four places and Wes Brown adding a new ingredient to their defence.

The only flaw in the theory that United will choose now to ease away from the rest is that a similar hunch was prevalent this time last year. Ferguson's side was top then, not second, but somehow the expected spurt never materialised. Instead, even with Europe out of the way, they went backwards until Arsenal roared past them and won the title at a canter.

United must be beginning to worry that history is repeating itself. It is almost impossible for a team to raise its game on cue and their performance against Chelsea showed clearly that they are still groping for the kind of fluency and domination that has characterised their recent hegemony in the domestic game.

They are, undeniably, in a strong position, nicely tucked in behind the leaders, but if the rest feel threatened by them, the reality is that United, too, are vulnerable to a team that suddenly reaches the peak of its form. If they do not do it, someone else will.

On Wednesday night, Chelsea went much of the way to proving that they have the necessary durability to sustain their challenge. Now, at last, with Desailly and Ferrer surging up their defence, they appear to have the solidity to compliment the reborn brilliance of Zola.

The little Italian is close to the form that won him so many admirers when he first arrived from Parma and he is a lethal weapon to have in any championship armoury. Gustavo Poyet is performing consistently and Marcel Desailly and Frank Leboeuf have formed a formidable partnership in defence.

Chelsea, alone with United, have sufficient depth in their squad to ride injuries and the multiple suspensions of Dennis Wise, their captain. Their consistency is improving, too, and if they can pepper a continuation of their unbeaten run with fewer draws and more wins, they will become harder and harder to rein in.

They, like Arsenal, appear to be benefiting from the thaw in the form of the players who helped their teams to the advanced stages of the World Cup. Only a fool would write off Arsenal - Wenger's team again. Arsenal are only seven points off the lead and they will be dangerous from here on in. It is hard to avoid the feeling, however, that either United or Chelsea has the quality and the quantity to finish above them.



Platt fields questions at a press conference in Genoa yesterday after being appointed technical supervisor of Sampdoria

Italian bitterness demands Platt blooms at Sampdoria

By MATT DICKINSON

AS HE spoke about his "dream job" of managing Sampdoria yesterday, David Platt glided effortlessly between English and fluent Italian. All that remains for him to prove is that he can speak the language of the training ground.

Obsessive as Platt has been in studying how to be a football coach, many in Italy believe that the former England captain should still be in the managerial classroom, rather than trying to save a big club from relegation.

The critics are not in Genoa, where Platt was warmly welcomed home to the club he served well as a player. Across Italy, though, the questioning persists as to whether a 32-year-old foreigner without the proper qualifications should be allowed to take charge of a club of Sampdoria's status. Italian rules stipulate that English coaches coming to Serie A must have run an FA Carling Premiership club or international side for five years, if they do not have the correct diploma. Hence Platt was introduced as technical supervisor yesterday, with Giorgio Veneri, an unknown 59-year-old, who will presumably make the tea, named first-team manager.

"To all intents and purposes, David Platt is our coach," Enrico Mantovani, the Sampdoria president, confirmed. It is not the first time that an Italian club has bypassed the rules. The difference in Platt's case is that he is only 32 and a complete novice entering the

most high-pressured league in Europe.

"If Sampdoria think they can get round the requirement by inventing a title, then that is a scandal," Azeglio Vicini, the former Italy coach and chairman of the Italian managers' association, said. "Platt is not even qualified to manage Sampdoria's youth team."

Platt, who retired as a player in the summer to spend a year learning his trade, appeared to be oblivious to the furor as he looked forward to his first game, at home to AC Milan, with typical level-headedness.

"Of course I sense an enormous pressure as I realise this is a very high-profile job and a historical appointment for someone of my age and experience," he said. "But anyone who knows me or who has followed by career understands that I always strive for perfection. I had planned to take 12 months out and I have walked away from several opportunities. This was just too good an offer to refuse."

"I asked the president regularly when I was a player whether I could one day return as Sampdoria's coach, so I can honestly say that this is a moment I have dreamed of for a very long time."



The former England captain takes his first training session

A member of the last trophy-winning side at Sampdoria, winning the Italian Cup in 1994, Platt has a massive task to bring glory back to Genoa. He inherits a side that is fourth from bottom in Serie A and there is not believed to be a vast pot of money for transfers. It is a brave move for a coach whose experience has been limited to helping Howard Wilkinson with the England Under-18 side.

Platt has insisted that he will be allowed to leave Sampdoria if the Football Association should want him back to run the national team, but one would have thought Milan on Sunday would be enough to be going on with.

Walsh's county contract offer cancelled

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

COURTNEY WALSH and Gloucestershire have reached a parting of the ways. The county club yesterday decided to withdraw the offer a new two-year contract to the West Indies fast bowler, who has been one of the most successful overseas players in the English game since making his debut in 1984.

Only Mike Procter among Gloucestershire's imports has enjoyed a bigger reputation than Walsh, now 36, who took 106 wickets in championship cricket last season, when, largely due to his efforts, the county finished fourth in the table.

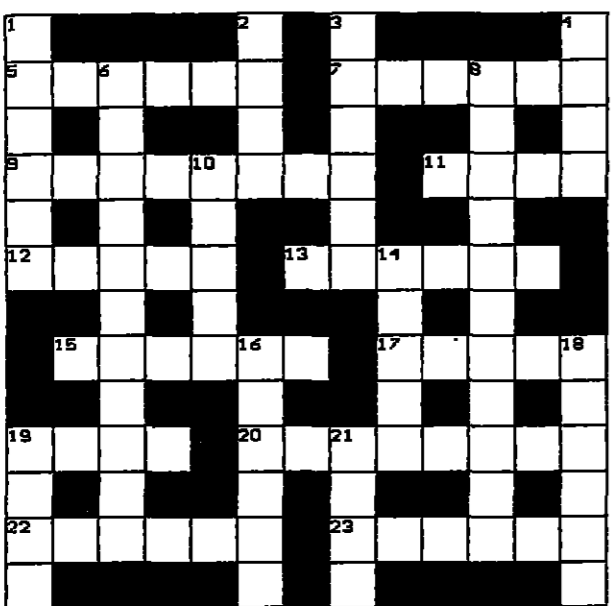
Gloucestershire have now decided that they want their overseas player available for all next season and are likely to seek an Australian all-rounder. Walsh, who has taken 860 wickets for the county, remains a vital part of the West Indies attack and is almost certain to be playing in the World Cup.

"I am absolutely amazed by Gloucestershire's about-turn, particularly after helping them get so close to winning the championship last season," Walsh said from South Africa yesterday. "I have been told the main reason for withdrawing the offer is the introduction of the two-division championship in the year 2000 being based on positions next season and that the balance of the side will be upset if Mark Alleyne is selected for England's World Cup squad."

"But, to me, it is bowlers who win matches and I believe these are not the real reasons for the withdrawal of the offer. I am possibly bowling as well as I ever have and I know I have at least two good seasons of first-class cricket left."

Colin Scunthorpe, the Gloucestershire chief executive, said: "If Mark gets in the World Cup squad, we will be losing our captain and best all-round player for the first two months of the season and that will have a great effect on the balance of the side. We had been a bit frustrated by Courtney's lack of commitment since we made him the offer. He hadn't said he was committed to Gloucestershire if he didn't make the West Indies World Cup squad."

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1592

ACROSS

- 5 St Francis's town (6)
- 7 Draw out, evoke (6)
- 9 Without defence (8)
- 11 Cautious, unforthcoming (4)
- 12 Broad; substantial (5)
- 13 With willingness (6)
- 15 A constricting snake (6)
- 17 Three Musketeers author (5)
- 19 An arachnid; tiny amount (4)
- 20 Andrew — philanthropist: his NY Hall (8)
- 22 OT prophet, anointed Saul (6)
- 23 Exactly halve (6)

DOWN

- 1 Andy —, US pop artist (6)
- 2 Long walk (4)
- 3 Ship; liquid container (6)
- 4 Guy; temporarily reside (4)
- 6 Sun and planets (5,6)
- 8 Great Frankish king, d. 814 (11)
- 10 Bloodsucker (5)
- 14 W H —, poet (5)
- 16 Esoteric (6)
- 18 Detective (6)
- 19 Ponder; poet's inspirer (4)
- 21 Loose, formal garment (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1591

- ACROSS: 1 Recuperate 8 Buttery 9 Miami 10 Daze
11 Charisma 13 Venue 14 Tithes 16 Libation 17 Serb
20 Mason 21 Grating 22 Dejectedly
DOWN: 1 Rabid 2 Citizens' Band 3 Peer 4 Rhythm
5 Temerity 6 Raise the wind 7 Finale 12 Sentence
13 Volume 15 Boggie 18 Bogy 19 Taut

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Brazilian reveals naked ambition



Vampeta: being paid about £60,000 to appear nude

A rising Brazilian footballer, known by the name of Vampeta, is causing a stir in the nation of 165 million committed Brazilian aficionados by agreeing to appear naked in G Magazine, a gay publication. "I am not gay, I'm doing it for the money," Vampeta, whose real name is Marcos André Batista Santos, said.

Wanderley Luxemburgo, the national coach of Brazil, regards Vampeta "as a model of the 21st century player". It is not idle talk from Luxemburgo, who became the Brazil coach after the World Cup this summer and who swiftly installed Vampeta as the playmaker in his side for internationals against Yugoslavia, Ecuador and Russia.

Luxemburgo has also been approached by officials of the gay magazine, who want him and Emerson Leão, formerly one of Brazil's most handsome goalkeepers, to follow suit. Luxemburgo, who is also

Rob Hughes on a top player happy to show off his turkey

for no cost other than the value of publicity, will publish a nude photograph of Vampeta on December 24. Vampeta will soon have another alias as a result, because Folha has come up with a caption of "Christmas turkey" to accompany their picture. In Brazil, the word turkey can also mean penis. Vampeta hails from a modest town, Nazare das Farinhas, and he knows that he faces a ribald homecoming when he returns to celebrate Christmas. He has 100,000 reasons for laughing it off, 100,001, presuming that Corinthians win the title against Cruzeiro. However, older celebrities of the Brazilian game have not been so impressed. Têlé Santana, who has raised more fine players than any other coach in Brazil, is dismayed. "Vampeta did not need to take money for this," he said. "In my day, if I had a homosexual in the team, I sent him off."

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